PC ZONE

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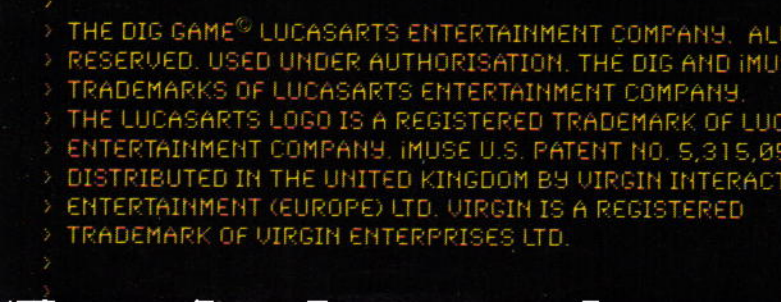
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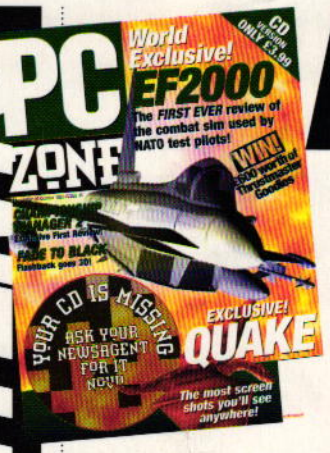
PPA

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Rest of the world CD £74.99

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DID's follow-up to *TFX* is finally here. Is it really the greatest combat simulator ever devised?
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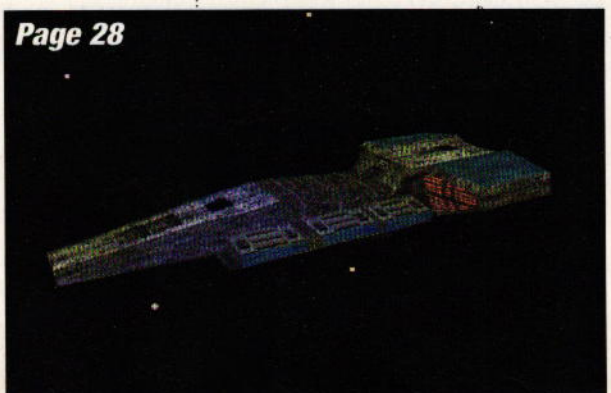
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It's nearly here... it must be... because we currently have more screen shots than any other magazine. Will it really make *Doom* look old-fashioned?

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Wing Commander 4 28
The next biggie from Origin is already well into production... this time with a bigger budget, the same cast and the prospect of a "proper" movie ahead. Check out our exclusive "behind the scenes" preview as we report from the set. *(Bloody hell, that makes us sound like a movie mag. Ed.)*

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Mortal Coil 37
Another *Doom* wannabe or is this really something a bit special? We visit the programmers of Virgin's forthcoming flesh-fest to check it out.

Normality Inc. 40
Top 3D, first-person perspective, point-and-click adventure from those clever bods at Gremlin Interactive. Could this be the shape of things to come for this style of game?

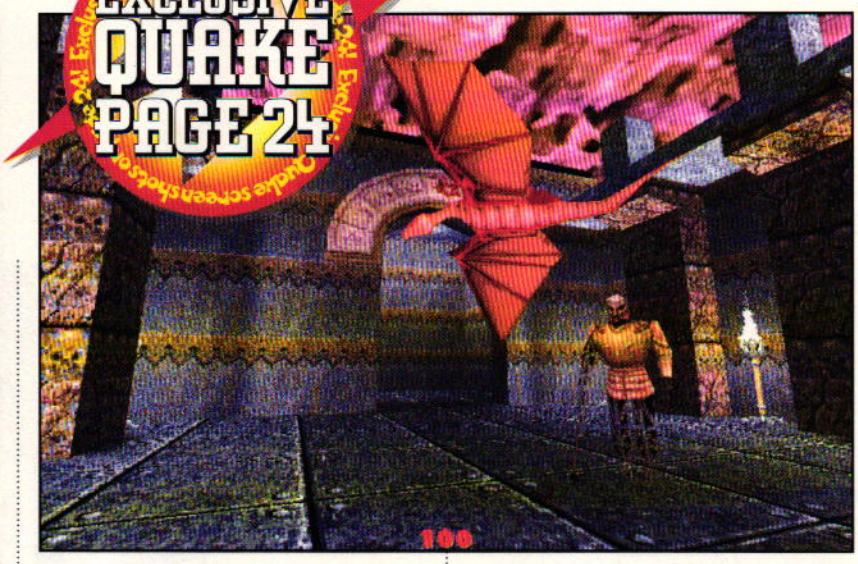
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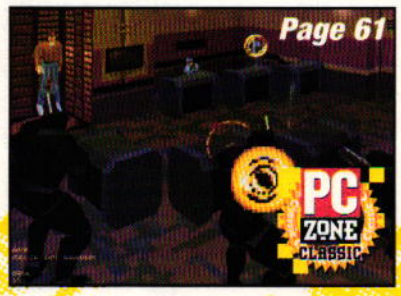
Stone Keep 50
Yes, yes, we've covered it before. But it looks as though this baby has slipped, so we've decided to take another look at it to see how it's coming along in development. Maybe we could chivvy it along a bit as well, eh?

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EF2000 54
Is this really the best combat simulation ever? Well we reckon it's pretty damn good and it seems that NATO does, too, as it's now using this simulation as a pilot training tool.

Fade to Black 61
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Need for Speed 66
There's absolutely no reason to buy a 3DO now that one of the finest road-racing games ever developed has finally been converted to the PC. This is top.

Apache Longbow 69
There aren't many helicopter sims around, but this definitely makes up for the lack. Read a review where you genuinely believe that the writer has wet himself with glee.

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This is the sequel to *The Journeyman Project*. Need we say more?

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Blown Away 82
A pretty crap game of a pretty crap film. Isn't it just great that so many of these movie license things work so well?

Cyberbykes 84
Rarely have we seen a game of this calibre. Wonder at the graphics, become excited by the sound, and genuinely feel aroused by the quality of gameplay.

Lemmings 3D 86
They're back but this time they're in 3D! Oh bloody hell! Will the little buggers get a deserved kick up the bum after this 3D treatment?

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Football-mania strikes the *PC Zone* office with Anco's sequel, followed by...

Championship Manager 2 97
...the exclusive review of Domark's fabulous footie management game, which has somehow managed to make the whole office grind to a halt during the past few weeks.

BUDGET REVIEWS

Virgin White Label 90
This month we take a look at the first batch of releases on Virgin's new budget label. *The 7th Guest* for just £9.99? You better believe it.

HARDWARE

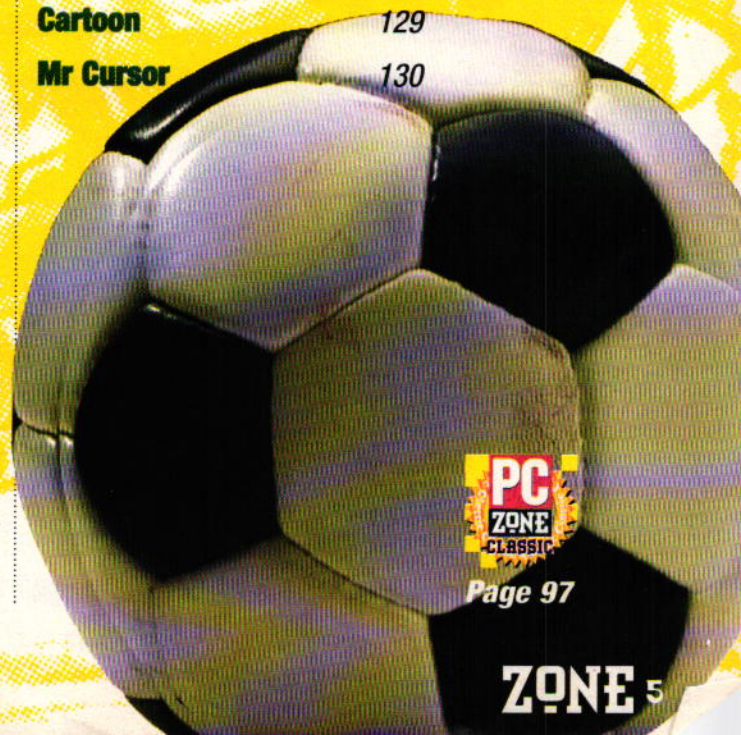
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The Propeller Head Kit 75
Thanks to DID and Thrustmaster, we're offerring the chance to win over £600 worth of propeller head gear in the shape of an F16 control stick, the brand-new weapons control stick and a set of rudder pedals. Flight sim-tastic or what?

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C:\>Cover Disk

HD DISK



Arcade action aplenty this month via a smart little four-player, top-down shoot 'em up adventure, known simply as *Threat*. And as if that wasn't enough for you, we've also managed to squeeze in a kaleidoscopic-fest of light and colour for your visual recreation.

Type <PCZONE> after making your A drive current (ie type <A:>) and follow the installation instructions.

Threat (The Game Factory)

An action-packed arcade thriller that can be played by up to four people simultaneously (just like that classic game *Gauntlet*).

Collect power-ups, weapons, credits and keys as you go along, stopping off only to shop for supplies and get your bearings.

Controls: Keyboard, gamepad, joystick

Cathuga (Freeware)

Free your mind and amaze your friends with this audio/visual trippytron type thing that turns your PC into a marshmallow of light and colour.

Controls: Mouse (and light switch dimmer)

Specifications: *See Standard Requirements boxout – next page.*

No CD?

If you are unable to get your grubby paws on the CD issue, then fear not! Simply fill out this slip, enclose your HD from the cover plus a cheque for a whole £1 and send it to:

Miles Tudor, CD Exchange (31), PC Zone, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover St, London. W1P 7HJ

***Your Details** (Please print clearly):*

Name: .....

Address: .....

.....

Post Code: .....

Please make cheques payable to:

DENNIS PUBLISHING Ltd.

CDs from previous issues are also available.

Phone Miles (*never* before 11.00am) on: 0171 917 7693

CD-ROM DISC



To access the playable demos and utilities on this month's fabulous cover CD, simply make the drive containing the disc current (ie type <D:>) and then type <ZONE>. Then all you need to do is follow the instructions on the screen and use your mouse to select from the menu.

PLAYABLE DEMOS

WORLD EXCLUSIVE

Magic Carpet 2 (Bullfrog)

We bring you an exclusive playable demo of the sequel to one of the best games of last year. *Magic Carpet 2* is faster, smoother and even more enjoyable than the original. And what's more, this time you can go inside, underground and zip about in the mysterious Arabian night. But you don't have to believe us – try it for yourself!

Controls: Mouse, keyboard

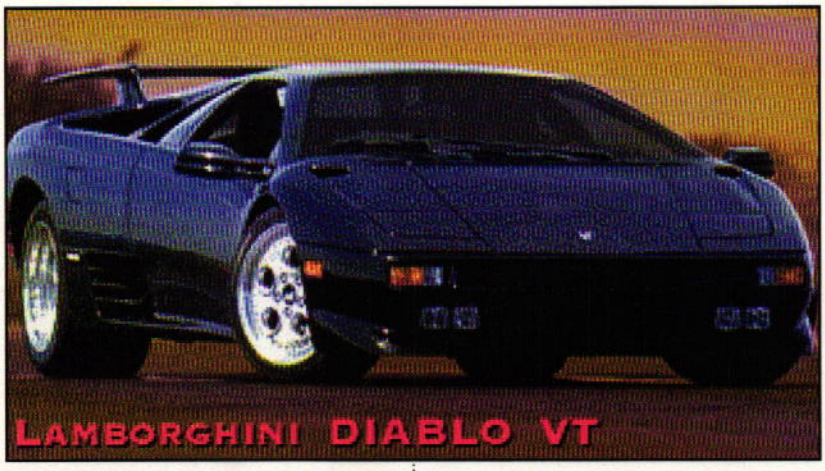
Specifications: 486 DX (Pentium recommended); 8Mb; VGA; SoundBlaster and compatibles

Primal Rage (Time Warner Interactive)

The coin-op conversion that everyone's been waiting for finally arrives on the

(Below) Mega Exclusive Playable Demo Alert! Check out the sequel to one of the biggest and best release of last year – *Magic Carpet 2* from Bullfrog.





(Left) *The Need For Speed* from Electronic Arts. High speed, wheel spinnin', tyre screechin' fun. Mirror – Signal - Massive Pile Up!

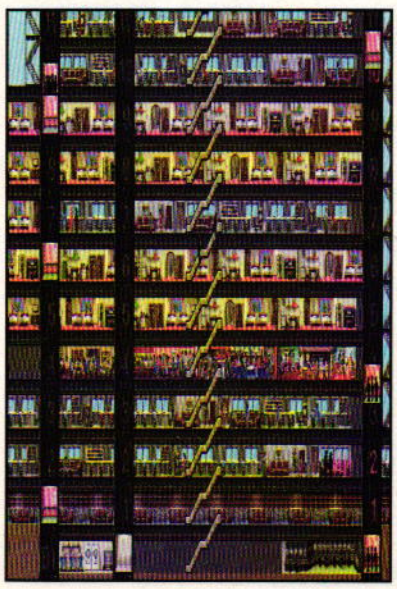
(Below left) *SimTower* from Maxis – As the Housemartins once said – B-B-B-Build!

PC. Check out some of the moves and animation in this brilliant playable demo and you'll see for yourself just why they're calling this arcade-perfect.
Controls: Keyboard, gamepad
Specifications: 486 DX 33 (Pentium recommended), 4Mb VGA/SVGA SoundBlaster and compatibles

Prisoner of Ice (Infogrames)
All the proof that you don't need the latest 3D engine or the word "LucasArts" on the box for a game to be a success. Infogrames' classic point-and-click adventure is one from the old school that can hold its own against any of today's adventure games.
Controls: Mouse, keyboard
Specifications: 486 DX 33 (Pentium recommended); 4Mb; VGA/SVGA; SoundBlaster and compatibles

Airpower (Mindscape)
The *Dawn Patrol* engine gets a re-vamp and doesn't suffer in the slightest when Rowan adds funny-looking planes and an improved flight engine and combat model. Plenty of strategy and hands-on combat action make this one of the best releases of the year.

Check out our keyboard overlay for a complete list of controls.



Controls: Keyboard, joystick
Specifications: 486 DX 33 (Pentium recommended); 4Mb; VGA/SVGA; SoundBlaster and compatibles

Need for Speed (Electronic Arts)
There's absolutely no reason to buy a 3DO now that the brilliant road-racing simulation from EA has been converted for the PC.

Need for Speed will leave you breathless with its speed, pace and lush graphics. Don't forget to honk that horn!
Controls: Keyboard, gamepad, joystick
Specifications: 486 DX 66 (Pentium recommended); 8Mb; VGA; SoundBlaster and compatibles

Terminal Velocity (US Gold)
Get ready for this! 3D shoot 'em up action at its best, courtesy of Apogee.

Check out the tunnels for power-ups and secret levels and shoot everything that moves.

Help!
The CD not working? HD playing up? The PCs just being a total bast? Then just relax, chill out, have a cold shower and then phone the relevant help line:

HD DISK HELP
Phone Matthew on 01274 736990
Any week day between 9am and 4pm.

CD-ROM HELP
Phone Miles Tudor on 0171 917 7693
Any week day between 11am and 6pm.
(DO NOT phone earlier as your calls will NOT be answered.)

If you are calling either help line, then please take note of the following points:
- If possible have your PC operating and near to the phone when you call.
- If this is not possible, note down as much relevant information as possible i.e. System type, sound card, RAM etc., plus the nature of the fault.
- Make sure you have a pen and paper to hand when you call to jot down the relevant info.

Tech specs
Unless otherwise indicated the standard systems requirements for this month's software are as follows:

Memory: 4Mb (8Mb recommended)
Processor: 386 DX (486 DX recommended)
Graphics: VGA/SVGA
Sound: SoundBlaster and compatibles

Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick, gamepad
Specifications: *See Standard Requirements boxout – above.*

Simtower (Maxis)
Build your very own sky-scraping condo/shopping mall/business centre/sushi bar building, but make sure you get the lifts (sorry, the elevators) in the right places and running at the right times, or your tower will quickly start to resemble Canary Wharf.
Controls: Mouse, keyboard
Specifications: 286 16Mhz (486 recommended); 4Mb (3Mb XMS essential); VGA/SVGA; SoundBlaster and compatibles

Picture Perfect Golf (Empire Interactive)
It's a golf game and it's er... picture perfect. It's also quite playable and very easy to get into. Just make sure you wear a sun hat.
Controls: Mouse, keyboard
Specifications: 486 DX 33 (Pentium recommended); 4Mb; VGA; SoundBlaster and compatibles

Raven (Mindscape)
A rather excellent 3D shoot 'em up set in San Francisco. You don't get to wear flowers in your hair, but never mind, »

MEGA EXCLUSIVE ALERT!
Absolute Exclusive Alert! Absolute Exclusive Alert!
As you may or may not know, ID is currently preparing to release some official new levels for *Doom II*. Yep, in just a couple of weeks you'll be able to march round a 20-wad "mission disk", with levels designed and officially endorsed by ID itself in the soon to be released *Doom II: The Master Levels*.

Luckily for you, we've persuaded one of the designers to submit a couple of his very own levels. Expertly crafted wads, which have been seen by ID, but weren't included 'cos there wasn't time or room to include them on the disk. So for a sneak preview of what to expect, switch to the *PC Zone* On-Line section on this month's cover CD and prepare to die a slow and horrible death.



« instead you get the chance to free Earth from the alien menace and shoot a load of yanks, too.
Controls: Mouse, keyboard
Specifications: 486 DX 33; 4Mb; VGA; SoundBlaster and compatibles

Druid (Mindscape)

A lush graphic adventure game from Mindscape, which will certainly keep you amused.

Using your mouse, move your roving reporter through the Mediaeval lands, killing everything and everyone that gets in your way.
Controls: Mouse
Specifications: 486 DX (Pentium recommended); 4Mb; VGA; SoundBlaster and compatibles

PC ZONE ON-LINE

For the full details on this month's On-Line feature, please turn to page 116.

To install the software, run *WinZip* (included on this month's disk) and unzip the files located in the ONLINE sub directory to your hard drive.

UTILITIES

As well as this month's stunning array of playable demos, we have also got a few utilities to make *Windows* that bit less of a chore.
WinZip: A *Windows* front end for *Pkunzip*
Video for Windows: Lets you watch .avi files on your PC.
McAffe Anti Virus: Keep your PC nicely virus free.
Paint Shop Pro 3.01: Create your own graphic images.
Quick Time 2.01: Now you can watch QuickTime movies.
Graphic Workshop for Windows: View graphic files the easy way.

All of these programs can be installed using the *PC Zone* installer, and have instructions contained within. Z

Wanted Shareware!

If you have any shareware you think is good enough to be included on PC Zone's CD, then please e-mail it to : pczone@cix.compulink.co.uk

You may even win a great game (or some budget games we've got kicking about in a box somewhere).

Help Me! I'm Frowning...

Stuck? PC acting like the proverbial pain in the posterior? Well before you go and ring our tech support line, just take a quick butchers at this handy Trouble-shooting guide.

If you experience a problem, the first thing to do is check out the README.TXT files. This will give you in-depth information on the demo. To do this, type:

Edit readme.txt

If you still have difficulties the following troubleshooting tips may help.

Amnesia?

The most common problem that you'll hit while running any of the demos is a memory problem. Some programs require EMS others XMS, and your PC's configuration needs to be altered accordingly. To change the system you will need to edit your CONFIG.SYS in DOS. To do this, go to the C drive by typing:

C:
CD\
Edit Config.sys

You should then look for a line that reads Device=C:\DOS\EMM386.exe (if it's not there, then type this in under the first line). You should then add an extra bit that will depend on which set up you require:

For EMS

The line should read:
Device=C:\DOS\EMM386.exe RAM

For XMS

The line should read:
Device=C:\DOS\EMM386.exe NOEMS

You are advised to keep the EMS setting as a default. If you have DOS 6.0 or higher you can type Memmaker at the DOS prompt and say "yes" to EMS if required, or "no" if XMS is needed. Remember that some games can require up to 590K free base memory.

Boot Disk

If you are still having problems, then the next step is to make a boot disk. If you are using DOS 6.0 or lower then just stick to the following steps:
Put a floppy in your A: drive and type: Format A:/S
This will erase all data on the diskette so use one that is no longer needed. When the disk has finished formatting, change to your A: drive. Type the following lines at the A prompt:

Copy con config.sys <Enter>
Dos=High <Enter>
Device=C:\DOS\Himem.sys <Enter>
Device=C:\DOS\EMM386.exe RAM <Enter>
(Or Device=C:\DOS\EMM386.exe NOEMS if XMS is required.)

Then add the lines for the sound card and CD-ROM drive in the same manner. (You can get these lines by looking at the original CONFIG.SYS on the C drive). Once finished press:
F6 <Enter>
You should see the message "1 file(s) copied." If the message does not appear, please follow the instructions again.

IMPORTANT! ONLY USE THESE INSTRUCTIONS ON THE A DRIVE

Next, type the following lines at the A: prompt:

Copy Con Autoexec.bat <Enter>
Prompt pg <Enter>

All sound card and CD-ROM drive lines

You can find these command lines in the AUTOEXEC.BAT on the C drive. They may look similar to this:

Set Blaster=A220 I5 D1 H5 P330 T6
Set Sound=C:\SB16

Please note that these lines may look like this. Check your own AUTOEXEC.BAT beforehand. Once you have completed this, press f6, and again you should see message "1 file(s) copied." If the message does not appear please follow the instructions again.

IMPORTANT! ONLY USE THESE INSTRUCTIONS ON THE A DRIVE

Once you have done this, with the disk in drive A, press <Ctrl> <Alt> <Delete> keys together to reboot.

Clean Boot

If you have DOS 6.2 or higher you should reboot your computer. When you get the message "Starting MS-DOS", hit the f8 key at the top of the keyboard. You will see the message "DOS will prompt you to confirm each CONFIG.SYS command". Say yes to the following lines:

DOS=High
Device=C:\DOS\Himem.sys
Device=C:\DOS\EMM386.exe RAM (Or NOEMS)

The relevant sound and CD drivers Say no to the rest of your lines until you are asked to process your AUTOEXEC.BAT. Say yes to this line and the following:

Prompt pg
Path C:\Windows; C:\DOS

Also say yes to all sound card and CD-ROM drivers. Say no to everything else. This should sort things out.

Still Stuck?

No joy with your HD or CD? Then reach for the phone and dial up some help.

HD Disk Help
Phone Matthew on 01274 736990
(Weekdays between 9am and 4pm)
CD-ROM Help
Phone Miles on 0171 917 7693
(Weekdays between 11am and 6pm)

Before you call: Have your PC operating (preferably near the phone) and make sure you have a pen and paper handy to note down any info. Please have details of your machine spec and configuration ready before you call.

Important

Some of the programs on the CD are shareware, and as such, are supplied as an evaluation service to our readers. If you like the programs and intend to continue using them, you should register them with the publishers concerned. In return you will receive updated versions, extra levels, junk mail and loads of other stuff (probably).

All these CDs and HDs have been virus checked. HOWEVER, neither PC Zone, Dennis Publishing nor any associated companies can be deemed liable for any problems that may arise from using this disk.

YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED!

AIR POWER

PREPARE TO DO BATTLE FOR TOTAL SUPREMACY

It's time to fly by the seat of your pants as Air Power, the first ever 3D Airship combat game puts you in control of a fleet of gargantuan airborne carriers and allows you to launch and recover different types of aircraft.

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* A challenging combination of flight simulation and tactical strategy - choose to gain support of over 100 communities by diplomacy or force.
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* 3 computer controlled opponents to compete against.
* A highly detailed map containing over 100 cities, towns and villages helps you venture into different regions, terrain and climate.
* A stirring soundtrack featuring Suppe's 'Light Cavalry' and Saint Saen's 'Danse Macabre'.
* Awesome digitised sound effects, music and radio chatter all add to the authentic flight command atmosphere.
* Full screen, full motion introduction with commentary. (CD-ROM version only)













"The game uses the brilliant flight engine used in the spectacular Dawn Patrol" PC Zone.

"Air Power is one of the most original flight sims in a long time" PC Gamer.

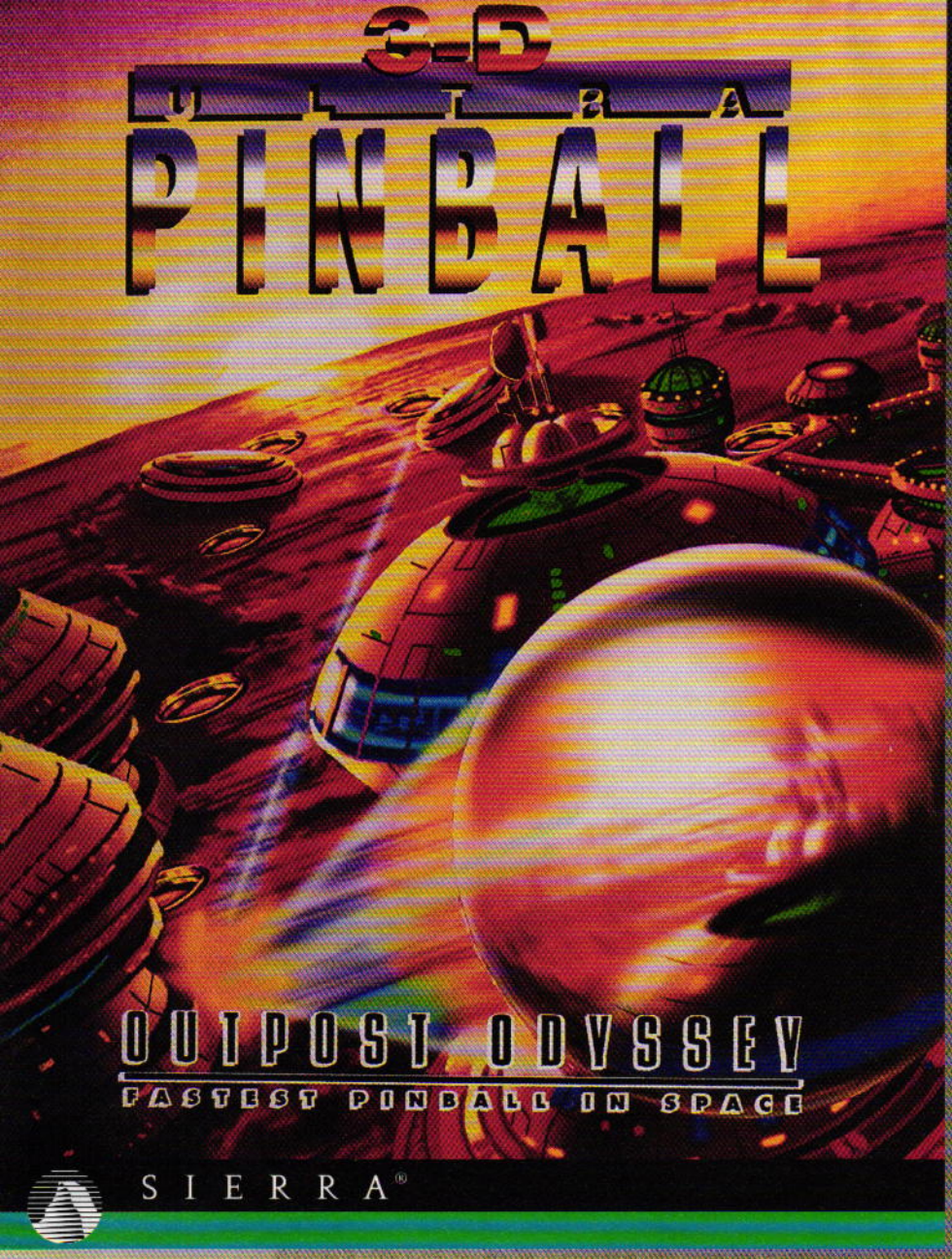
"It's fast, entertaining and quite unlike anything that I've ever played before" PC Review.

"Truly stunning" CD ROM Magazine.

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Doom II: The Master Levels



(Above) Meet Andre, master wad-maker.

(Below) Map *á la* complex, it must be a master level.

ABOUT SIX MONTHS AGO, ID'S Shawn Green (designer of *Doom*, author of *Doom II*, level 25) began rifling through the thousands of wad files on CompuServe, The Internet, and American On-Line, looking for talent – people with an eye for detail and a talent for architecture, who understood *Doom*, and who knew that too many megaspheres spoil the broth. He finally found four wad authors – Tom Mustaine, Jim F Flinn, John Anderson (aka Dr Sleep) and Chris Klie, and set about commissioning new levels for *"The Master Levels"*.

Across the pond in Bristol, England, illustration student Andre Sverre Kvernmo was finishing off his latest wad, one of 20 he had knocked up.

His friends thought they were good and so did he, but he didn't bother uploading them anywhere – he was just mucking about. But then he read *PC Zone* and saw that ID was releasing a disk of "amateur" wads for *Doom II*.

"I decided my wads were good enough and that I'd try to get them on that disk," says Andre. "I wrote to ID's e-mail address. No answer. I sent some of my best wads. No answer. I spent £30 on phone bills trying to get through."

Finally, after weeks of trying, Andre managed to get Shawn Greene on the phone. Yes, he had received Andre's wads, and yes, they were excellent. Apparently, Jay Wilbur (ID's PR guy) had seen one of Andre's wads and said, "Wow! Let's get this one!". But no, they couldn't have Andre's wads on the disk. Sorry, but there just wasn't time. Maybe next time?

Gutted and knocked for six, Andre retreated to bed, only getting up to drink barrels of alcohol and swear at people. He was really, really upset.

But suddenly, two weeks later, a phone call. It was Shawn Greene. "He basically said they wanted my wads after all, but I'd need to get them to him super-fast." Andre did so, and Shawn chose four for the disk: Black Tower, Mephisto, Blood Sea, and the excellently named Teeth (The Express Elevator To Hell). There were changes to be made though...

"Yeah, Shawn suggested a couple of changes. Mainly minor stuff like more ammo, more health and fixing textures. One level needed a whole change in theme, as there was already a similarly themed level on the disk, and one other needed about 14 changes."

Before you get your knickers in a twist, this is no *"Thy Cash Consumed"* money-raking exercise. The levels have no new graphics, no new monsters, no new weapons, and no new sounds. It's just a disk with some standalone levels on it. But, remember, these are levels which will push *Doom*'s architecture prowess to the limit. The most cunning and good-looking levels ever. And you can get an exclusive taster of what's to come by sampling Andre's levels (which ID turned down), on this month's coverdisk. Not because they're crap, you'll understand, but because they didn't have time to get them all in. So, for your delectation, are: Blood Flood, The Image Of Evil, Eye Of The Storm, and We Who Are About To Die. Enjoy.

Andre is gearing up for the fame and fortune which will inevitably come, but in the meantime, however, he just spends his time on the phone. "Yeah, I phone up Shawn and have a chat. And I've been talking to the other wad authors and we're gonna hopefully do our own little compilation of levels."

Doom II: The Master Levels (provisional title) will be coming out "when it's finished", which is probably this month. We must warn you though, that ID is notorious for changing things at the last minute, so any of the concrete facts (the title, the number of wads etc) in this superb article may change. So there.







Tilt

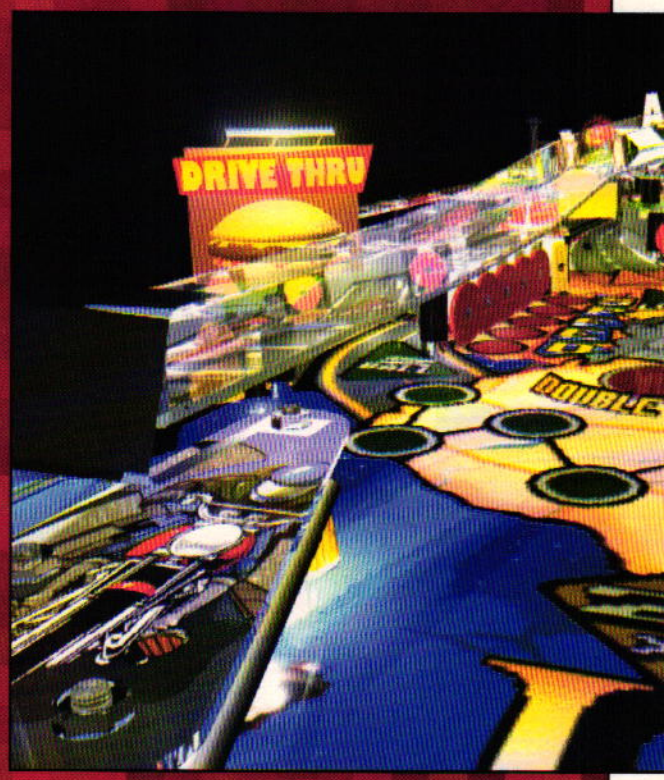


Pinball games on the PC have been rather passé of late. Yeah, they've just about got the ball movement right, you've got hi-res tables now and the sound has improved, but when it comes to the crunch, it's just not as good as the real thing, is it?

Well, that's exactly what developers NMS thought, so it decided to do something a bit special itself; the result is something quite awesome – ground-breakingly awesome.

For a start, *Tilt* offers a player's eye 3D perspective, which is infinitely more involving than the more common 2D view. The new perspective is all down to a super speedy new engine that loads around 75 pre-rendered images of the table into memory at the start of play and then displays the relevant ones as the ball flies around the table. The result is a very fast and visually stunning game that doesn't rely on scaling bitmaps and doesn't suffer from poor pixelation either. To make sure it plays as good as it looks, NMS ripped apart various pinball machines and examined how they were built, what components were used, where they went and why. It then measured them all and went about recreating an exact copy of each component, finally bolting it all together again using Alias' SGI-based rendering package, *Power Animator*. The results, again, are impressive, with each table accurately recreated on screen – ramps, rivets, welding marks and all. Add numerous cut scenes – "off table" games and distractions, a ball that acts just like the real thing and reflects the objects around it as it zips about the table – and you're on to a winner. Believe the hype – this will be a pinball game like no other.

The good news is that *Tilt* should be available in October, from Virgin.



The Crying Game

Mindscape and Intelligent Games have got together again to produce a new breed of adventure-come-RPGer.

It's got a suitably weirdy, futuristic plot that puts the player in the shoes of a Raptor, a high-tech thief who specialises in plundering archaeological sites for rare and valuable artefacts. The player is one of just a number of Raptors who have been lured into an ancient and mysterious underground temple in search of the Holy Grail.

The game features real-time 3D graphics, loads of puzzles and plenty of interaction with the numerous inhabitants of the underground world.

Azrael's Tear is due for release in December.









Star Trek: Generations

As first revealed in your favourite magazine way back in March of this year, Spectrum HoloByte is working on a brand new game based on the recent Trek-fest movie, *Star Trek: Generations*.

Although nothing has yet been confirmed, rumours indicate that the game will follow the plot of the movie and be split into three main playing sections: an adventurin' type bit, a space combat type bit, and a walk around and shoot things bit. The game is also rumoured to feature full voiceovers from the original cast of the film and may even sport a multi-player feature.

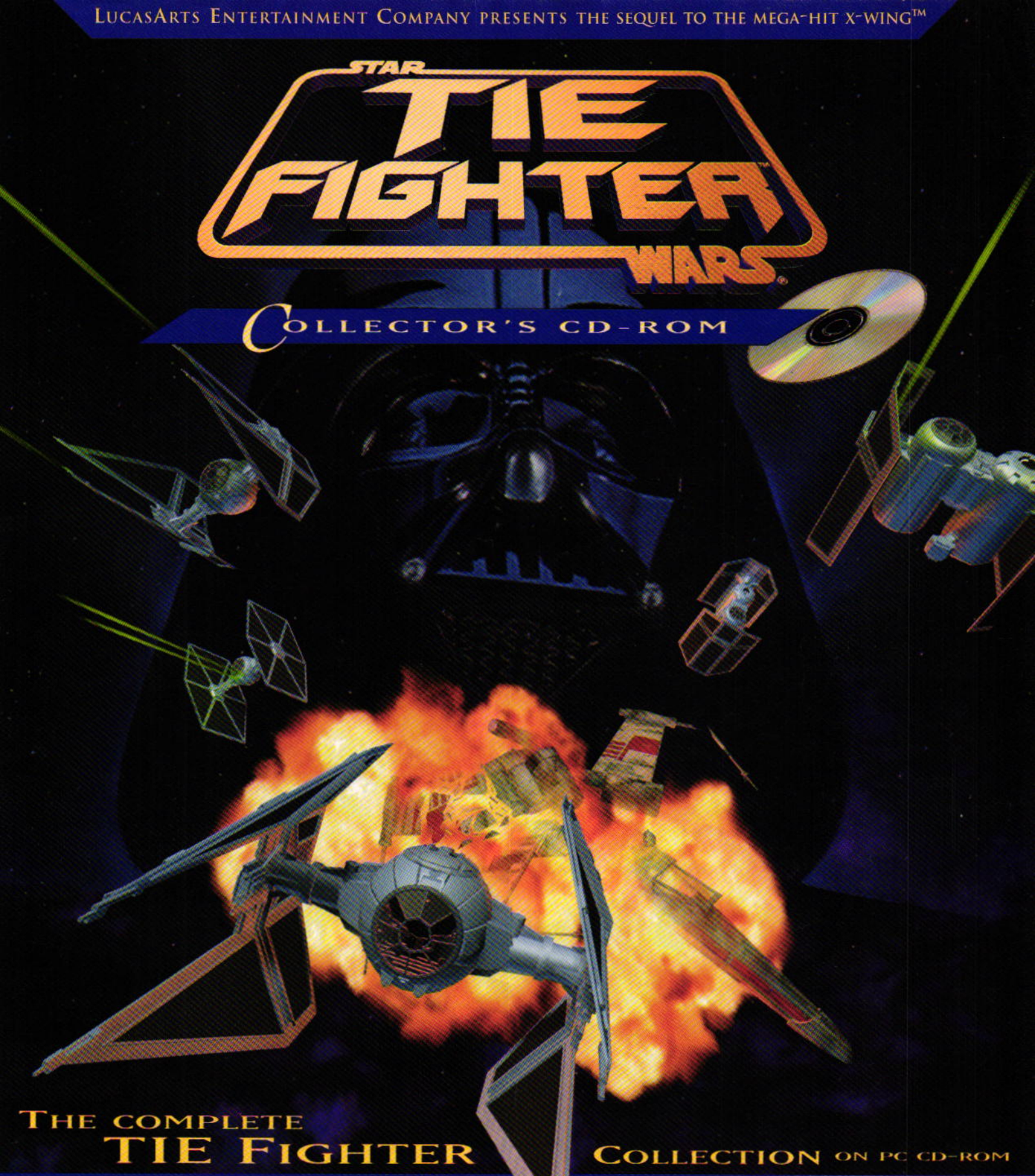
Star Trek: Generations is due for release in December and will be published by MicroProse/Spectrum HoloByte.



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Two From Elite

THERE SEEM TO BE TWO TYPES OF GAME THAT EVERY DEVELOPER worth its simms is keen to develop at the moment, one being 3D footie games, and the other is "In Yer Face" driving games. Developer Elite is proving itself to be no exception, and is currently putting the finishing touches to its two projects, known as *On-Side* and *Dirt Racer*.

On-Side, as you can see from the screenshot above, looks not a million miles away from Sega's arcade smash *Virtua Soccer*. Each player is made up of 200 polygons and the game sports over 7,500 frames of animation, a digitised commentary, a five-a-side option and a player/manager facility. Though you may think that it doesn't look quite as impressive as Gremlin's *Actua Soccer*, it does make use of a user-friendly control system and allegedly sports a pretty competent AI.

Dirt Racer looks similarly chunksome, but first reports indicate that Elite has a very playable little racing game on its hands. Instead of opting to develop a simulation-type racing game and compete with the likes of *The Need For Speed* and *FIGP2*, Elite has come up with a racing game that's packed with features (including 20 tracks, six different types of vehicle, 40 vehicle configurations, as well as league and cup options), supports a two-player link up over a modem or serial link, and is already a lot of fun and easy to get into.

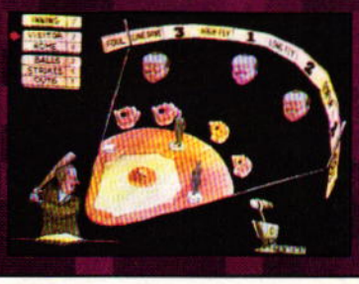
You won't have to wait long to see them in action, as both *On-Side* and *Dirt Racer* are due out in November from Elite.

Take Your Best Shot

Who needs a screensaver when you've got so many attractive options with *Windows 95*? Well, if you don't mind looking at big cats and flying windows then maybe you've got a point, but it's all a bit lame, isn't it?

Luckily, there's an antidote for screen-staring boredom – a brilliant new screen saver based on the exquisitely entertaining animations from award-winning artist Bill Plympton (you know, the bloke responsible for the crispy Nik-Nak ads where two besuited gents bash the hell out of each other?). As well as wallpaper and various screensavers, there are arcade games on the CD, as well as a special screen-lock facility that stops people from accessing your PC.

Take Your Best Shot is released through 7th Level and retails for around £20. Contact 7th Level on 01932 569606.



Dispatches

+++ *Save Yourself a Fiver*

Quickshot is currently offering a special promotion on its new Skymaster joystick while stocks last. The new stick – which is designed for use with flight sims and space combat games – features a throttle control slide and a four-way coolly hat. It's available now for just £34.99 for a limited time only (the usual retail price is a fiver more at £39.99).

Contact Quickshot on 0181-365 1993 for further details.



+++ *Countdown to the PC*

The first programme ever screened on Channel Four, *Countdown*, presented by the innocuous Richard Whiteley and brain-busting, washing powder woman Carol Vorderman, is coming to a PC screen near you, courtesy of VCI. The game will feature all of the games played on the show, and will hopefully fail to include any of Whiteley's puerile attempts at chatty humour (miaoow!).

Countdown should be in the shops now, retailing at around £19.99. Contact VCI on 01923 255558 for further details.

+++ *Empire Animated*

Empire Interactive has just signed up a rather talented bunch of 3D artists and animators, renowned throughout the broadcasting industry as Minds Eye, to work on the visuals for its new portfolio of products.

The team, which has recently done work for the BBC (including a new Open University snatch) as well as a host of other independent production companies, is currently working on the intro and cut scenes to Empire's forthcoming strategy/action sim entitled *Red Ghost*. Using *3D Studio* and *Alias*, it is able to create some of the most amazing visual effects (the animations we've seen are stunning) and generate characters that move and act realistically in a detailed environment.

Red Ghost is due for release next month from Empire Interactive.

Grand Prix Manager

Not content with producing what promises to be the best Formula 1 driving simulation, MicroProse has just unveiled details of a rather splendid looking Formula 1 racing management sim.

Grand Prix Manager will be a *Windows*-based strategy management game in which the player must control all aspects of Team management, from negotiating for the best drivers and engines, to raising sponsorship finance and race tactics. Players can either opt for the quick start option and take over an existing team, or start the game from scratch.

The game will contain action-packed cut scenes a-plenty and feature a simple to use *Windows*-based interface. Players will either be able to play against computer-controlled teams, or against other players via a network, and there's even talk of tying it in with *Geoff Crammond's Formula 1 Grand Prix 2* at a later stage; this means that you'll be able to manage your own team *and* drive the car as well.

Grand Prix Manager is due for release in November, published by MicroProse.





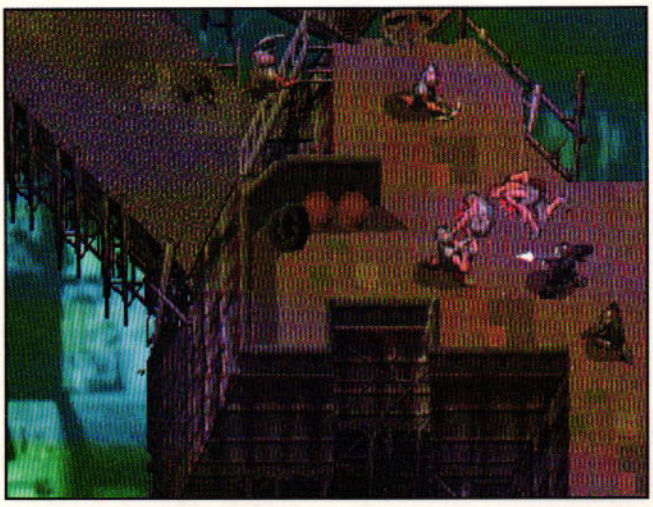


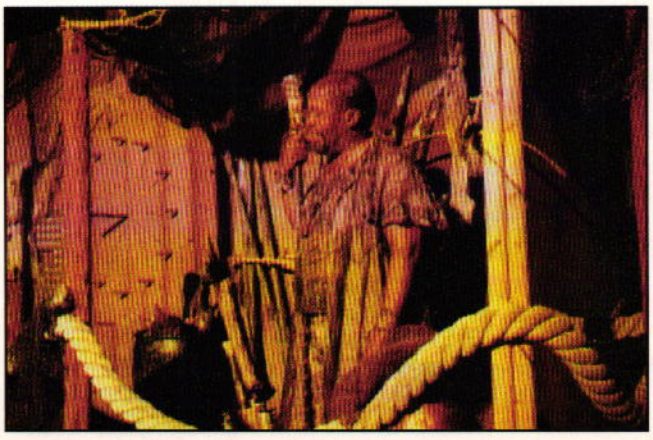
WaterWorld

THE GOOD NEWS ABOUT THIS LICENSE IS THAT IT'S NOT A PLATFORM game. For once, it seems that the developer has actually looked at the film and tried to create a game that's based on the plot. So what's *WaterWorld* about? Well, it's a strategy game that looks just a little bit like *Command & Conquer*, except that it's set in a world where the polar ice caps have melted and Man now roams the oceans looking for land and resources.

The player must either battle against the CPU (or another player if you're playing over a network) and race in real-time to build weapons, collect food and other vital resources, and then kick merry hell out of the other. The game features rather smart, rendered, 3D graphics, loads of cinematic bits from the film (as you'd expect), and a wicked AI.

WaterWorld is due for release in November from Interplay.





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Key

- ▲ Higher position than last month
- ▼ Lower position than last month
- ◆ Same position as last month
- ● New Entry
- RE Re-Entry

GALLUP CHARTS

What's selling really well at the moment then? Not always what you'd think. Despite what we say in our incredibly informative and exceptionally witty reviews, it still seems that you lot aren't sitting up and paying attention. Some of you obviously have a masochistic desire to waste money...

Top 20 Full Price Titles

1. X-Wing/B-Wing/IMP. Pursuit	▲	US Gold
2. Doom 2	▼	Virgin
3. Sim City 2000	▼	Maxis
4. Ultimate Soccer Manager	▼	Impressions
5. Sam & Max/Indiana Jones/D... Tentacle	▲	US Gold
6. FIFA International Soccer	◆	Electronic Arts
7. X-Wing	▲	US Gold
8. Premier Manager 3	▲	Gremlin Interactive
9. NASCAR	◆	Virgin
10. Terminal Velocity	●	US Gold
11. Tie Fighter	▼	Lucas Arts
12. Player Manager 2	●	Anco/Virgin
13. Theme Park	▼	Bullfrog
14. Fantasy Manager	▲	ANCO
15. Ultimate Doom: Flesh Consumed	●	GT Interactive
16. Comanche Super Pack	▼	US Gold
17. Discworld	▼	Psygnosis
18. TFX	▼	Ocean
19. European Challenge	RE	Anco
20. The Lion King	RE	Virgin

Top 10 PC Budget Titles

1. Magic Boy	◆	Empire
2. Brian Lara's Cricket	◆	Audiogenic
3. Dawn Patrol	RE	Empire
4. Universal Clip Art: Batman/NFL	▲	Advantage Point
5. Terminal Velocity	RE	US Gold
6. Dune 2	◆	Hit Squad
7. Easy to Learn Computing	▲	Premier Collection
8. Detroit	▼	Impressions
9. Doom (MS)	▼	Micro Star
10. Easy to Learn Computing	▼	Premier Collection

Top 10 CD-ROM Titles

1. Star Trek TNG: A Final Unity	◆	MicroProse
2. FX Fighter	●	GTE/Philips
3. Theme Park	RE	Bullfrog
4. IndyCar Racing	▲	White Label
5. Dark Forces	▲	LucasArts
6. Discworld	◆	Psygnosis
7. Ultimate Doom: Flesh Consumed	●	GT Interactive
8. SimCity 2000	RE	Maxis
9. 1944 Across the Rhine	●	MicroProse
10. Microsoft Flight Simulator V5.1	●	Microsoft



BLAM! Machinehead

CORE HAS BEEN BUSY WORKING AWAY AT A NEW FIRST-PERSON perspective shooter, curiously entitled *BLAM! Machinehead*.

The game features stunning rendered graphics and a facility to change the game map during gameplay. Confused? No doubt you will be. The game is said to be very adult in its nature (which will no doubt guarantee sales on that tag alone) and proudly exhibits a self-proclaimed xxx/18 certificate. Players will view the action through the visor of Dr Kimberley Stride's helmet (see our screenshot, above) as she rides her Vorpal Blade hover bike through superbly rendered exterior and interior locations. The game already boasts four massive missions and some amazing cut scenes, and we'll be bringing you more on this next month.

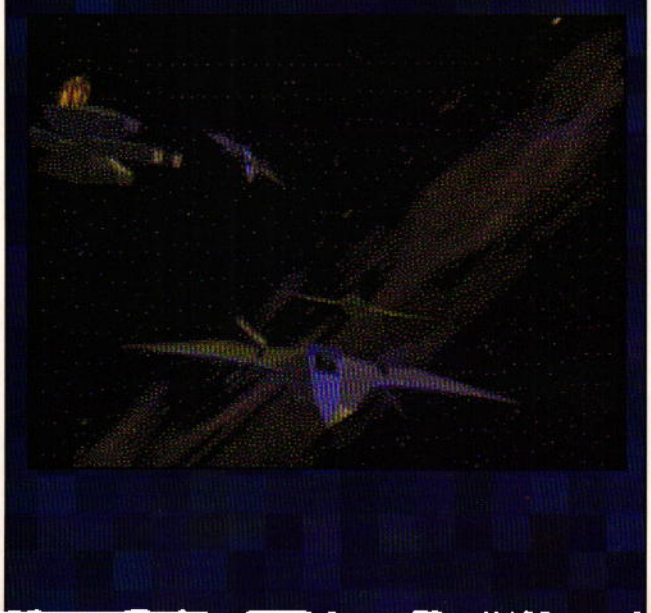
BLAM! Machinehead is set for a December release from Core Design.

Star Rangers

Older and wiser Atari users might remember the classic space combat simulator *Star Raiders*, a pant wettingly good game for its time. US publisher Interactive Magic do, and it's about to release a new game called *Star Rangers*. The company claims that the new game has all the qualities of the original, but is a damn sight better looking.

Set in the 23rd century, the player is part of the intergalactic Border Patrol, whose role it is to defend the outer reaches of deep space from invading alien forces. The game features crisp, texture-mapped, SVGA graphics; a practice mode that quickly launches the player into the action; a campaign mode for strategists; and three levels of difficulty.

Due for release towards the end of the year in December, *Star Rangers* will be published by I-Magic.



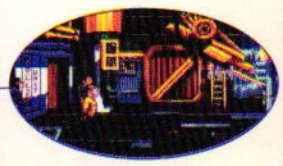
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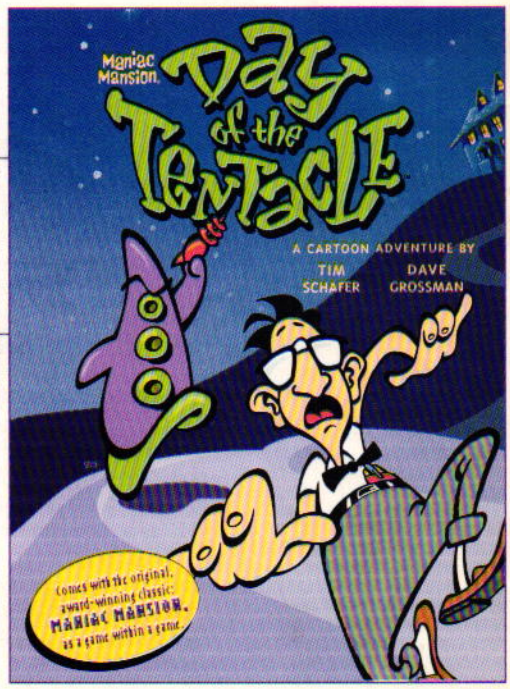




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AT HOME WITH... BETHESDA

This month, Conor McNicholas goes undercover to put a tap on Washington's finest, Bethesda Softworks.

WASHINGTON D.C. USA: CITY OF government, of power, of intrigue and secret meetings with people called Vladimir. The perfect setting, then, for *PC Zone* to reaffirm its place at the cutting edge of investigative journalism, and dig some gaming gossip in the city of Watergate.

This month, *Through the Keyhole* focuses its night-imaging binoculars on Bethesda Softworks – a Washington-based software house that's been home to, among others, *The Elder Scrolls: Arena*, and more *Terminator* games than you could stuff in a duffel bag. Watch my back, I'm going in...

Times, they are a changing

Everyone in Washington D.C. has something to with the Government – fact. Bethesda is no exception. The President is a guy called Christopher Weaver, and Christopher Weaver is a man "in the know". This guy used to be a senior technical advisor to the US Congress. Christopher knew where things were heading, so Christopher decided to get into PC games. Bethesda is the result.

Walking into Bethesda's corner of the building is like walking into some of the later levels of *Doom*. It's not so much the usual garish fantasy models stuck all over the developers' computer monitors; it's more the fact that it's so dark. The walls are black, for God's sake! You need some of those *Descent* flares just to get from one end of the corridor to the other. It seems that all this is to create an atmosphere conducive to the production of computer games. Sounds like a dodgy bulb to me but, hey, it seems to be working.



(Right) *Daggerfall 2*, the sequel to *Elder Scrolls*, is "going to be a landmark work" which brings adventures back to the Dark Ages.

(Far right) *Tenth Planet* – pushing back the boundaries of space combat as we know it.





Things are hotting up in the Bethesda camp. It's been ominously quiet over recent months, but with good reason. The last big titles from Bethesda – *The Elder Scrolls: Arena* and *The Terminator Rampage* – were somewhat disappointing, but things are about to change...

What is really pouring water on Bethesda's sauna at the moment, however, is its new X^{n}gine. Yeah, I know, it's another games company with another game engine, but this one has a rather spiffing name and some yummy games to go with it.

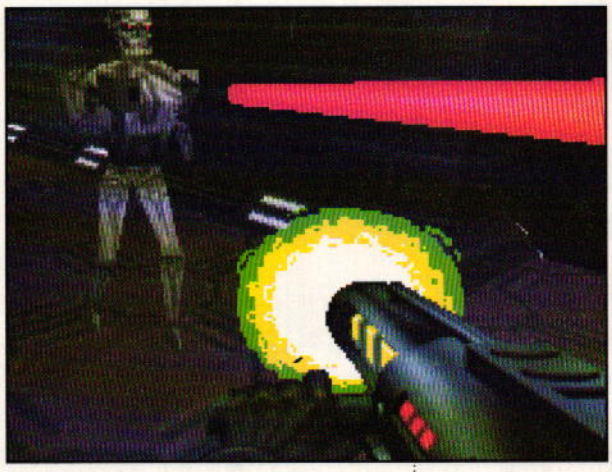
You might not have heard of *Tenth Planet*, but that, quite frankly, is your loss, Sunshine. It is a game that has had hardened game journos threatening to miss flights home just to stay on the network. Early game graphics have been described as awe-inspiring – and that was just this one, semi-complete level: In front of you, hanging in deep space, is a bizarre, alien space station and there's a spaceship on the other side that wants you dead. Time to chase each other around while trying not to scuff your paintwork. The beauty of this is that there are almost no restrictions. You can fly away from the spacestation until it's only a tiny speck in the starry backdrop, or swoop into the station's own docking bay to launch a surprise attack. You could be forgiven for forgetting about screen pixels altogether – images of the spacestation flatly refuse to break up, no matter how close you get, staying silky smooth right up until you hit wipeout. Naturally, they won't tell me how it's done. I think the policy is just to mumble something about algorithms and hope everyone goes quiet. This *Tenth Planet* beast will be networkable, too, so you'll be able to chase each other around your own spacestations in your own corner of hyperspace. Neat.

Daggerfall

Elder Scrolls, for starters, is about to see its sequel, called *Daggerfall*. Christopher says, "It's going to be a landmark work." Okay, it's his job to say that, but *Daggerfall* is a game that will finally be able to



(Right & far right) This time the all-new *Terminator* game will owe more to *Descent* than *Wolfenstein*, with a true 3D engine and stunning graphics.



(Above) Finally, a game that's worthy of the film license. *Terminator – Future Shock* will make *Dark Forces* seem positively lame.

live up to the name of a graphic adventure. Forget those nasty, pixelated, globular, semi-picture thingys we all used to try and ignore while we got on with the adventure; the images for *Daggerfall* were built in 3D in Soft Image, and action in the game uses the X^{n}gine. The game will also have a depth that will make *Elder Scrolls* seem like a paddling pool.

Bethesda has had a license to produce games based on the *Terminator* films for some time now, but hasn't always made the best job of it. Its last, *The Terminator Rampage*, was rushed out just before *Doom* and, because it owed rather more to *Wolfenstein* than its younger, more sophisticated brother, it sunk without a trace. Fortunately, though, the up-coming *Terminator: Future Shock* owes a lot more to *Descent* than it does to *Doom*. This time, as Christopher says, "It's a true 3D engine rather than a 2½D engine masquerading as 3D."

Future Shock is dark and moody, but that's not to say there's nothing going on. If you want, you can pick one of the cars on the street and drive it around the game level. It makes *Dark Forces* look like paint staying wet.

There's also a dedicated racing game using the X^{n}gine due soon called *X-Car*.

Quality Danish

So who's putting all this soaring machine code together? Well, for some strange reason (that has never been adequately explained) a lot of them are Danish. Something in the bacon I expect. Still, it's quality that counts, and I'd rather it was the Danes than some dangerous, subversive foreign power infiltrating the heart of the greatest nation on earth.

What this Washington mission has proved is that the mental stability of our youth is at risk – too much fun, too little discipline.

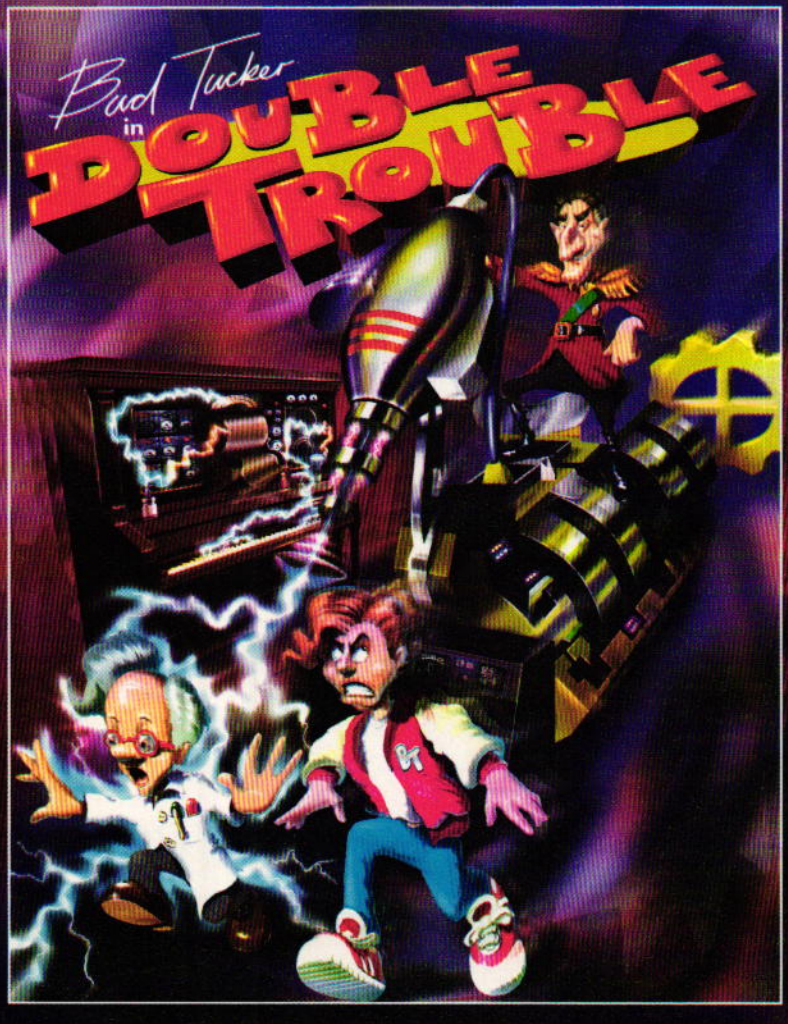
Report over. Now eat this page.

THE BIZARRE "TENTH PLANET"

Tenth Planet is one of those bizarre projects that starts out as a game and ends up as a film by way of a novel ... or something. The whole thing is the result of a collaboration between Bethesda and Centropolis Entertainment – the production team behind *Universal Soldier* and the wonderfully pompous *Stargate*.

The intention is to combine the gaming quality of Bethesda's X^{n}gine with the cinematic vision of Centropolis. Roland Emmerich and Dean Devlin, who both co-wrote the script for *Stargate*, have written the script for *Tenth Planet*. "What makes this project different from the rest is that, with *Tenth Planet*, we're not taking an old movie script and trying to shoehorn it into a game, we're creating a script to make the game work first and foremost. This is also a deal between the people who will actually be doing the work rather corporate executives and 'talking heads' in the film industry."

Tenth Planet should be available sometime in Summer '96.



"Will Bud Tucker be the Guybrush Threepwood of the '90s?"
PC Home

" Tom and Jerry meets Bottom... [a] point 'n' click adventure with more gags than a roomful of hostages"
PC Power

" brillo graphics, an incredibly simple user-interface and full speech throughout.....a winner"
PC Zone



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MERIT









Start e-mailing your Christmas Lists to Santa. This winter the game on everyone's monitor will be *Quake* – ID's follow-up to (James Earl Jones' voice)... *Doom*. *PC Zone* bring you the official released screenshots, as well as some exclusive never-seen-before grabs. Spooge* on, dude. David McCandless reports.

Quake

IT'S COMING! IT'S COMING! QUAKE, THE follow-up to *Doom*, and The Game To End All Games is coming. This Christmas. For months now, the Internet has been buzzing with rumour upon rumour upon rumour *upon rumour* of *Quake* news. Scant titbits have been slowly trickling through from ID's HQ in Dallas. Rumours of magic hammers, 100-player network games, dragons, and "spooge" have been passed around like nan bread.

John Romero and Dave Taylor, *Quake*'s programmers, have popped up on DWANGO (the pan-US game server system) and America On-Line (sad CompuServe-type thing), dropping hints and then buggering off before anyone has a chance to ask them anything.

The basic through-line is that *Quake* will take the gamesplaying world by storm with a revolutionary 3D engine, revolutionary graphics and multi-player gameplay, revolutionary weapons and level architecture, and some other revolutionary-type stuff. Very much like er, *Doom* did, two years ago. Here's a summary of what to expect.

(Above) In low-res mode (320x200), *Quake* will run in the standard 256 colours, but hi-res (640x400) has an option for 24-bit (16.7 million colours) for extra realism.







(Right) Some shots from *Doom 1*, level 5 (bottom row) "*Quake*-ified" by the maestros at ID (top row).

















Setting

Fantasy *D&D*-style locale. Not snoozy like *Dungeon Master*, but really fast-paced and atmospheric, like *Heretic*, with a possible storyline based on Norse Gods/Strapping Young Men/Blond Ayrian Heroes Strolling Around Their Bronze Muscled Torsos Glistening With The Sweat Of Youthful Exuberance – ahem.

Key words here are: gothic, shadowy, scary and "spooge".

Plot

None as yet ("Plot? Ha ha ha!"). Probably will be as cellophane-esque as *Doom*'s. Hopefully, will skirt the Vicky The Viking quest for the magic hammer type stuff, and just get down to destruction.

Keywords here are: blood, guts, gore, intestines, steaming.

Monsters

In tune with the gothic surrounds, *Quake* will sport a variety of *D&D*-style monsties. Dragon and knights (as you can see on the screenshots) as well as ghosts and witches. "The monsters will be cool," says Romero. "They'll have leaders and followers."

The much raved-about "Monsters vs Monsters" fights that you can engineer in *Doom* will be kept, but they won't be that much cleverer. "Good artificial intelligence is a waste of time; it slows the game down," says Taylor.

Weapons

Not an awful lot of information on the armaments as yet; just that the main weapon will be a hammer of sorts to squish opponents heads. The rocket launchers, shotguns, and plasma rifles that we've all learnt to love won't gel so well with the setting, but hopefully ID will avoid *Heretic*'s crappy "wands" and "crossbows". Likely to be a "hellgate cube" – a kind of *R-Type*-style guardian, which floats about you and may change sides. There are definitely no spells. Or trolls. Or pixies.

Keywords: Heretic, Schmeretic.

Control System

"The best way to play *Quake* will be with mouse and keyboard," says Taylor, although *Quake* will support separate keys for looking up or down, and an automatic up/down mode. ID also plans to support VR headsets for a totally wrap-around *Quake*-o-rama. You will also, thank God, be able to strafe.

Keywords: thank God, hurray.



Quaketalk

•"Okay, imagine this. You have a health thing and you don't need it. You meet someone in the game who has a nice weapon but is really low on health. You guys decide to exchange items. You don't really trust this guy so you bring along a friend and tell him to hide out somewhere with a bead on the other guy's head. You meet somewhere in the middle of a field and face off. You drop your health, he drops his weapon and you both strafe over the object of your desire. You start to back away (not turning your back on him) and suddenly decide you're going to whack this guy before he gets a chance to use that health. You move towards him and draw back with your hammer. He notices this and starts to duck, but it's too late. You smash him in the head and watch him fly down to the ground, landing on his side. You smash his still body a few more times and cause him to explode! Now you and your friend pick up all of the items your dead friend left on the ground. As you are walking off, you pick up his severed head and put it in a bag. That will come in useful later... when you need something to sacrifice to a demon."

John Romero conceptualising Quake's gameplay

•"It still uses a bsp, but it's 3D now, and there is a separate visibility list structure in every sub-volume for faster clipping to the view volume than *Doom*."

Dave Taylor, coder on Quake, explaining the "betterness" of Quake over Doom in programming-speak

•"Quake makes *Doom* look like a sad cartoon."

John Romero clarifying the matter

•"*Quake* will run at the same speed as *Doom* on the same system."

John Romero (chinny reckon).

•"Plot? Dunno. Fantasy of some sort."

Dave Taylor on the plot

•"Plot? Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha!"

John Romero on the same subject

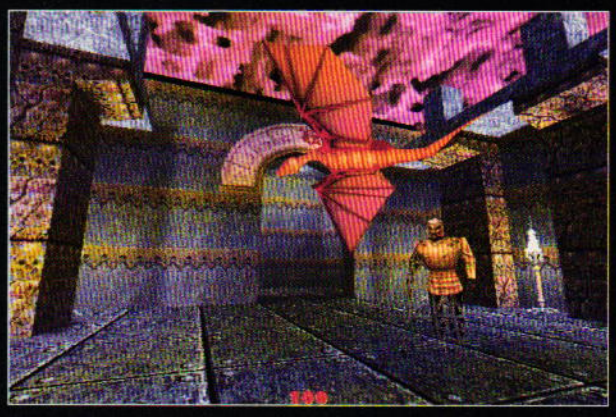
•"So *Quake* will have an evil kinda setting? One that will make every Christian foam at the mouth?"
"That's the goal."

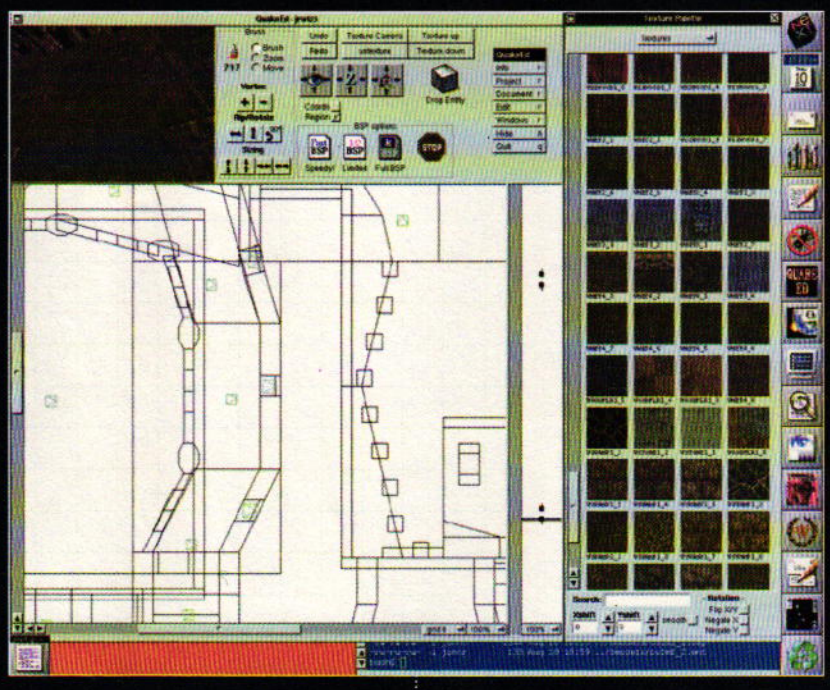
Dave Taylor explaining that Quake will be as outrageous as Mary Whitehouse having anal sex on TV

•"Well, gonna take off now. Gotta do some stuff on my huge swamp wizard's castle."

A typical Romero evening

* "Spooge" is American slang for, ahem, "ejaculate".





(Above) Early sprites from the game. A fully animated knight, with moving head and arms. Plus an almighty dragon. Gosh.

(above right) An exclusive screenshot of ID's very own *Quake* level editor, running on a NeXT ninja workstation. DEU users – look and drool.

Sourced from

QuakeTalk 3.5 by Joost Schuur

santa@northpole.pixies.com

www.portal.com/~hleukart

Id Software's Web Page (id.software.com)

« Graphics

The screenshots say it all really. Mega shading, texture-mapping, parallaxed sky, light sourcing, shadows – all in real time, all in true 3D. The monsters and other players will be polygon-based so will, theoretically anyway, have *Virtua Fighter*-style animation. *Quake* will also "probably" support some 3D accelerator cards (such as the mythical Glint).

Keyword: 'spooooooge'.

Sound

Quake will support 3D surround sound and may have soundtracks by that legendary punk band, *Nine Inch Nails*, and, oxymoron city, Thomas Dolby. Unconfirmed at this stage, although recent postings seem to indicate that there will be no music; just ambient sound effects (such as screams and people gargling in their own blood).

Keyword: Dolby, cool, and, last but not least, "spooge".

Multi-player

Here's the crunch. As with *Doom*, ID is developing the network/modem game first and promise unbelievable possibilities. Dedicated *Quake* servers will pop up all around the world, allowing a "possible" 100 players *in the same game* ("if the server can take it"). Romero also promises that deathmatch will be as fast and frenetic as *Doom*'s, but at the same time will demand more skills from the players to interact with the more complex geography.

Modem play will be fully supported and there's also a possibility of cross-Internet games.

Keywords here: phone bill, dead social life, sad, UberFragMeister, and, of course, "spooge".

Editing

Quake will be fully customisable. All the maps and "entity forms" will be in easy-to-understand text files, with the graphics in standard .LBM format. You'll also be able to design new monsters, new weapons, add new sounds, and create new levels "easily". Also, if you upload your new stuff to your local dedicated *Quake* server, every player online will have access to them.

Keywords here: cool, wow, fab, holey moley, not forgetting "spooge".

Without doubt, *Quake* will be the gaming event of the year. Other games developers and gamesplayers alike are chewing their nails down to the wrist in anticipation. The screenshots look good. The rumours sound great. And the release date seems attainable. We can but wait. But let's leave the final words to Dave Taylor shall we?

"Oh, when you saw *Wolf* you spooged on your knees right? Then *Doom* came out and you spooged all over yourself again, only this time more. 'Wow,' you thought, 'I didn't know I could spooge *that* much.' Just wait till *Quake*, you'll be mopping spooge up for days."

Says it all really, doesn't it. Z















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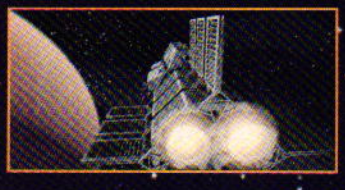
MICHAEL DORN
(Star Trek: The Next Generation)

PATRICIA CHARBONNEAU
(K-2, Robo Cop II)









It is the year 2134. The Earth is a war-torn and battle-scarred shell in a permanent state of interstellar war. As the rebel fighter pilot of a deep space station, you encounter a planet suspended in another time; where electrical storms and chemical snow envelope the landscape. In this desolate yet beautiful environment you must face the ultimate human challenge - at what price survival?







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Wing

Wing Commander III has sold over half a million units world-wide and was widely venerated as one of the biggest game releases of all time. If that's not an excuse to do a sequel, then I don't know what is, argues Jeremy Wells. We sent him Stateside to LA, where they're shooting the live action footage, to talk to the game's producer and director (and Mr Origin) Chris Roberts.







IN PRODUCTION

IT WAS ONE OF THE MOST HYPED releases of last year, and if you had a machine that could manage to run it properly (ie at least a DX2/66 with 8MB of RAM and a fast-ish video card), you could actually appreciate what all the fuss was about. Even before it was released, everybody knew that _Wing III_ was a bit special. It was _the_ first true interactive movie adventure, with real "stars" acting in it and quite a nifty space combat bit, which still managed to hold it's own against anything Lucas-Arts could throw at it. It was good, the best thing of it's kind on the PC. So how could they possibly top it...?

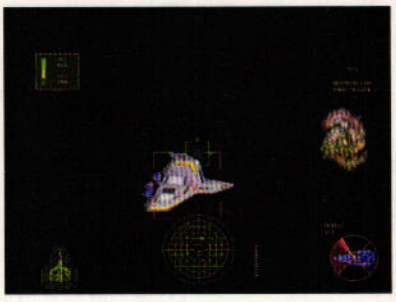
I'm sure they can...

...Well, Chris is confident they can. I managed to drag him off a very busy set and toss him a few posers, much to the fury and dismay of the Assistant Director, who spent the entire interview giving me daggers through the dry ice smoke that's being constantly pumped out of a black box and fanned around the set by some bloke with a huge fan.

They need Chris on set, now – there's no time to do interviews. They all hate journalists, 'cos they waste their time. Journalists (except those from film magazines) are scum. Worse still, I'm British. They don't want some Johnny Foreigner grabbing their main man and taking up his valuable time, asking questions about computer games. Even when I turn round I can feel their eyes burning into my back. Uperturbed, I offer up my starter for ten in my best Hugh Grant accent:

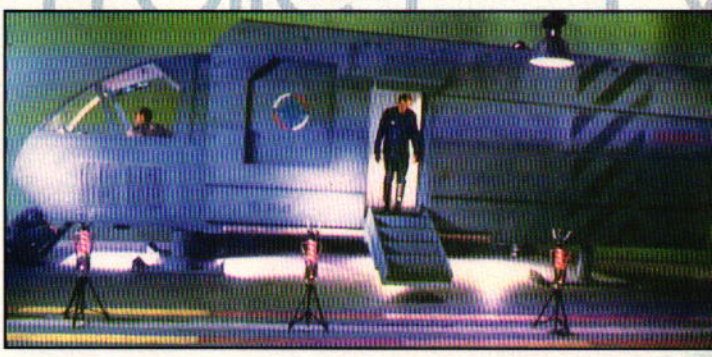
So Chris (_looks sheepishly at ground, pushes floppy fringe back from forehead, shines brogue on back of tweed trousers etc, etc,_) is it a film or a game?

"Well, I think it's best described as a story. The _Wing Commander_ games were always stories, this is just better told. Sure, it borrows bits from different genres: film, adventure and space shoot 'em up, but it's not any one type of game. What we've tried to do is take the best elements of each and blend them



Commander IV





together to make something really extra special."

How is it different from the previous game?

"Well, this time we're filming with 35mm film instead of videotape, so the quality of the live-action stuff is much higher than before, and we're using real sets instead of rendered stuff, so it's altogether more atmospheric. When we shot the footage for *Wing III* we limited ourselves by using computer-generated sets, which meant that we had to use a static camera. This time round, because we're using real "movie-like" sets, we can now film in smoke-filled rooms and make use of moving cameras and special lighting techniques to create a greater sense of pace and tension. It really is just like a movie in terms of quality now."

So the budget went skywards pretty quickly, eh?

"Yeah! You can say that again," Chris quips with an embarrassed smile. "The budget for *Wing IV* is roughly twice that of *Wing III*."

Which is how much exactly?

"Officially, we're talking something around $8 million for the entire production."

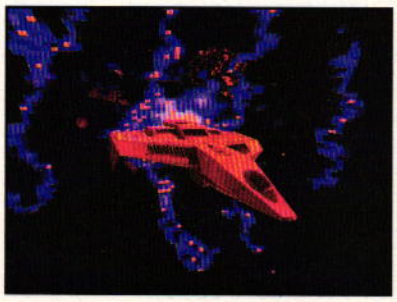
(*Gulp!*) And you haven't quite finished filming yet, have you?

"No, but we're pretty much on schedule. We've got a good crew and it's really coming together brilliantly. The expensive things are the sets. We've built nearly 40 different sets altogether, ranging from futuristic cocktail bars to staff quarters. It's pretty impressive really, but that's what takes up so much time. Building the sets, dressing them, lighting them, shooting all the different scenes and then tearing them down to make way for another.

It's quite a crazy way to do things really, but the results are just awesome. And it needs to be big if it's going to be believable."







Porn Free?!

There may not be any porn actress in *Wing Commander IV*, but you'll recognise that many of the old faces from *Wing III* are there, as well as a few new ones:

Mark Hamill



Well, you all know who this is, don't you? He's mellowed out a bit after all that Kilrathi killing stuff, but he's still a top bloke and very respected throughout the Confederation.

Mark's a bit of an old hand at all this interactive movie stuff now, although he confesses that this time round it's "much more like a conventional TV/Film show", what with all the real sets and lights and stuff.

He still admits to being a bit of a no-hoper at computer games and regularly embarrasses his kids when he plays them at home, forcing them to plead desperately, "Dad! Don't play that in front of our friends!"

Malcolm MacDowell



Sinister, spooky and very menacing – you wouldn't let this man look after your new puppy whilst you popped down to the newsagents.

A devil of a man in the recent *Star Trek: Generations* movie, where he managed to give both Kirk and Picard a very hard time on that rock with the funny stair case. This man is one to watch (closely).

Tom Wilson



A favourite with many a die-hard, Winger Maniac is still a crazy dude, but seems to have sorted things out with Col. Blair, adopting a kind of begrudging respect for the man that killed all those Kilrathi.

Tom admits that Maniac is "a really fun character to play", and reveals "I love doing sequels. People now recognise me as Maniac and not Biff. It's great!"

Holly Gagnier



Plays Sosa, the love interest who gets upset when she loses her boyfriend in space. Very excited at the prospect of playing herself (Leave it!) – "I want to play it now!" – and maintains that "I am not a bimbo! What I do is from my heart and guts, not sitting in front of a computer!" Quite.



(Above) Marky Mark gets all mean and tough for the cameras.

(Background image and Below) Each scene is planned in meticulous detail – a sketch is made for the story-board; the set is constructed; and the scene shot – usually about 17 zillion times, until the director (Chris) is a happy man.

The Story Continues

The bloody war between the humans and cat-like Kilrathi is over and Blair is back on his farm, playing the part of homely hero, enjoying the peace and quiet. However, problems are beginning to crop up on a new front and this time it's a bit too close for comfort. Civil wars and unrest have broken out in the Border Worlds. Blair (the player) is recalled to help the Terran government stamp out the rebellions and remove any threat to the Confederation before it starts to splinter under increasing political pressure. Thing is, nobody knows who's responsible. Is it the Kilrathi, or are the culprits working from within to bring the Confederation to it's knees? It's up to Blair to find out what's going on, who's responsible and decide what he's going to do about it.

This is your first time in the Director's chair. So how are you finding it?

"It's pretty good. I'm enjoying the challenge. With *Wing III* I co-directed, so I learnt a lot. This time round there's more going on – we're working with a bigger cast and live sets, and luckily we're filming in a controlled environment in the studio, so it could be a lot worse."

But how does it differ from, say, how you worked on the original *Wing Commander*?

"Well, previously I would work with the programmers and artists, explain what I wanted to do and then they would go away and do it, come back a few days or weeks later and show me what they had come up with. This way is much quicker. There's more energy, more feedback. We shoot the scene and I can then look at it through the play-back. If it doesn't work out, we do it again. Compared to the old way, it's pretty much instant. I feel like I have more control."

What improvements have you made, apart from the different filming techniques?

"Well, we've tried to give the player more choices. You can now choose your own missions, as well as who you fly with, and we've introduced more strategy and tactics to give the feeling of a bigger, better world that's a lot more involved. The player will feel a lot more in control."

So what of the actual space combat?

"It's all been incremental changes really. It was pretty much there with *Wing III* and we've just built on what we already had. Basically, the engine's a bit faster, there's digital music and effects, the graphics are a bit sharper and we've spent a lot of time improving the AI. We can do a lot better job of it now. *Wing III* was real cutting-edge stuff and as a result, some things could have been better. We've learnt how to do things a little better second time round and do a much better job.

Technology is equalling out now. Everybody can get their hands on a 3D engine and do a *Doom*-clone or a shoot 'em up, but it's how you put it together, how you tell the story, that's most important now. The *Wing Commander* games have always had very strong storylines and characters, and *Wing IV* is no exception. It's altogether more involving for the player – an experience, not a game."

What's next, then? *Strike Commander 2* perhaps?

"No. I don't think so. But I'm working on a couple of projects at the moment ready for next year, the most obvious being a full-scale movie."

A real movie, like *Star Wars*? (excitedly)

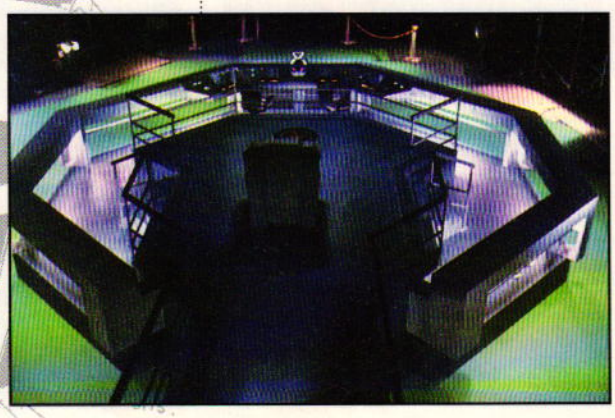
"Yeah – well we're almost there at the moment. The budget's already up there with the made-for-TV movies. We've got the expertise, the crew, the sets, the actors and an excellent storyline, so it's naturally the next step – the next level."

Would it be a continuation of the plot from *Wing 4* and feature the same cast?

"Ideally, yes. I've spoken to Mark [Hamill] about it and he's keen to do it, as is everyone else. I've just got to find the money. It probably won't follow on from *Wing IV*, though. I'd rather go back to the beginning and tell the story properly from the start."

And will there be another game?

"Sure. The plan at the moment is to film the movie and then set aside extra time to shoot the footage for the game."



Product details

Developer: Origin

Publisher: Electronic Arts

Telephone: 01753 549442

Format: CD-ROM

Release date: December

And loads of special effects?

"You bet. And we won't have to worry about constructing models and huge sets like they did in the original *Star Wars* movies. We'll do the whole thing with computers – generate all the space ships and back drops, using the artists who've worked on this project, and lace it together with the live-action stuff. It'll be cool."

Isn't that what George Lucas wants to do with the next lot of *Star Wars* films?

"I believe so. But we have an awful lot of experience in this area, through working on the *Wing Commander* games and other projects, so I'm confident we can produce something pretty special."

And the other thing?

"I've been talking with the British fantasy author, Michael Moorcock, for around a year now about doing some kind of fantasy action/adventure game, which incorporates live-action stuff with an amazing combat system. I love his books, they're brilliant, and when I found out that he's now living in Texas, just down the road from Origin, I just had to meet up with him. He's a really interesting guy."

Sounds cool. And what's it going to be called?

"At the moment it's called *Silver Heart*, although that might change, as it's not going to be released until next year. We've got a lot to do yet."

(I spy a mad-looking assistant director marching towards us with a look of journalist loathing in her eye. Time to let Chris go or I'm for it. Just one more question:)

So Chris, what games are *you* playing at the moment?

"When I get the time I like to play *Full Throttle*. It's not too taxing and it's easy to jump in and out of. And *Descent*. We've got it running over the network in the office at the moment and it's awesome."

(At this point Chris is suddenly grabbed by the arm and dragged back on set by the now furious assistant director. In Hollywood, I guess time really is money. Chris shrugs helplessly and disappears into the smoke that's still being pumped onto the set. I guess that's a wrap then.) Z

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IN PRODUCTION

Mindscape

Mindscape is currently working on its most ambitious projects to date. Chris Anderson reports.





(Left) All of the characters in *Warhammer* were constructed in 3D before being animated.



Product details

Developer: Mindscape
Publisher: Mindscape
Telephone: 01444 246333
Format: CD-ROM
Release date: October/November

AVID FANS OF GAMES WORKSHOPS' *Warhammer* table-top game are in for a real treat when Mindscape finishes its PC conversion of the game. It's still in its early stages of development, but already *Warhammer* is looking rather special.

In terms of gameplay, *Warhammer* is quite similar to *Ambush at Sorinor* from Empire, in as much as you play a mercenary who travels the world looking for work, selling your services to the highest bidder. However, any similarity between the two games ends there. *Ambush at Sorinor* was pretty okay for its time, but *Warhammer* looks set to become the best-looking strategy game ever (with the possible exception of *Command and Conquer*).

Mindscape has been working hand in hand with Games Workshop to ensure that all the characters look exactly like their table-top counterparts, and the results are simply stunning. The battle sequences are extremely impressive and you can view them from any angle, with complete 360-degree freedom of movement across 3D scrolling landscapes, and it's all in glorious SVGA, too.

All of the battles are played out in real-time, sort of *Syndicate* style, so you will need quick reflexes as well as a sound battle strategy. You will have 25 different friendly unit types to choose from; over 30 different enemies to battle with; and there are over 30 characters for you to meet, with full audio speech for them all.

To ensure totally non-linear gameplay, the game has multiple pathways, giving you complete freedom to plan and execute the missions as you see fit.

Warhammer will be coming your way in November. And you can be sure we will give you a complete review of the product as soon as it's ready.

(Far right) *Cyberspeed* is shaping up to look very sexy indeed. Check out the graphics.





(Bottom left & right) The character work in *Warhammer* is very distinctive and instantly recognizable.

(Far bottom right) *Al Unser Jnr* boasts some decidedly *Virtua Racing* like graphics.

Cyberspeed

Mindscape is also working on a new futuristic racing game called *Cyberspeed*. It features texture-mapped polygon racetracks, running at 30 frames per second; eight airships to choose from; and a choice of first- and third-person viewpoints during races.

In addition to zooming around the various tracks, you will also get the opportunity to blow up everything you don't like the look of, by picking up the various weapons that you find throughout the game. There are nine different race tracks to choose from, covering a total of three worlds, and all the tracks have alternate routes to ensure your racing experience will be different every time you play.

Cyberspeed is due out in November.

Al Unser Junior

If you would rather play a "proper" racing game, you might want to wait for *Al Unser Junior Arcade Racing*, another game the chaps at Mindscape have in the pipeline. And as you may have guessed from the title, the game is aimed at people who want to race for fun, as opposed to being a simulation of the real thing. It has 15 racing circuits, three levels of difficulty, and first- and third-person perspective viewpoints.

According to Mindscape, this will be the first game released that uses *Windows 95* directly.

The game should be out any day now. Keep your eyes peeled for a full review next month. Z



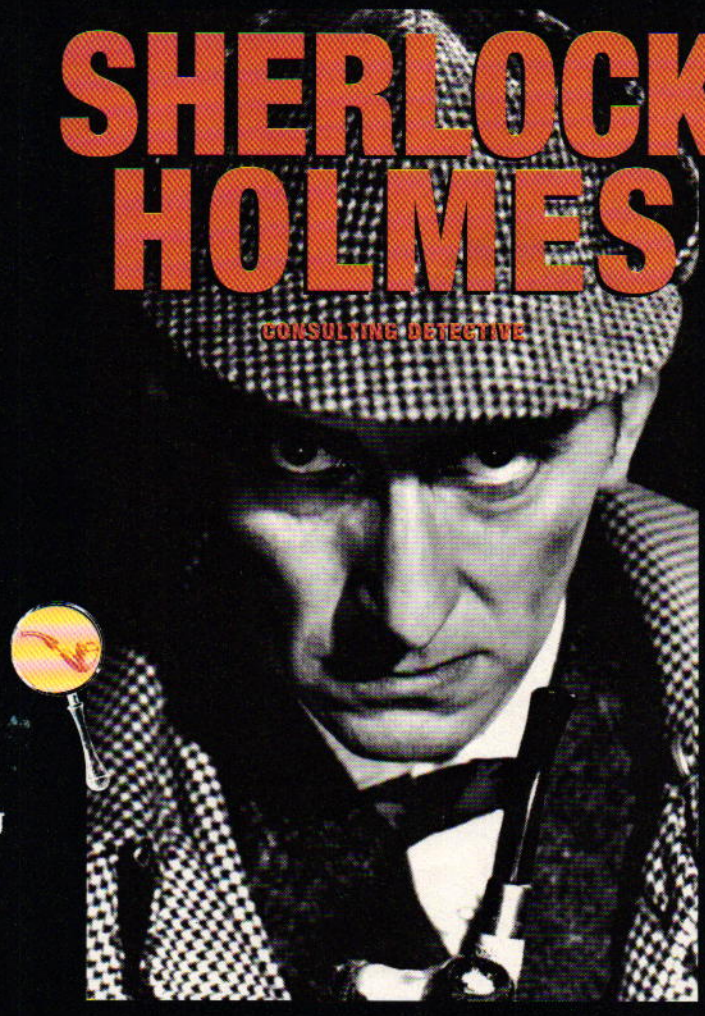




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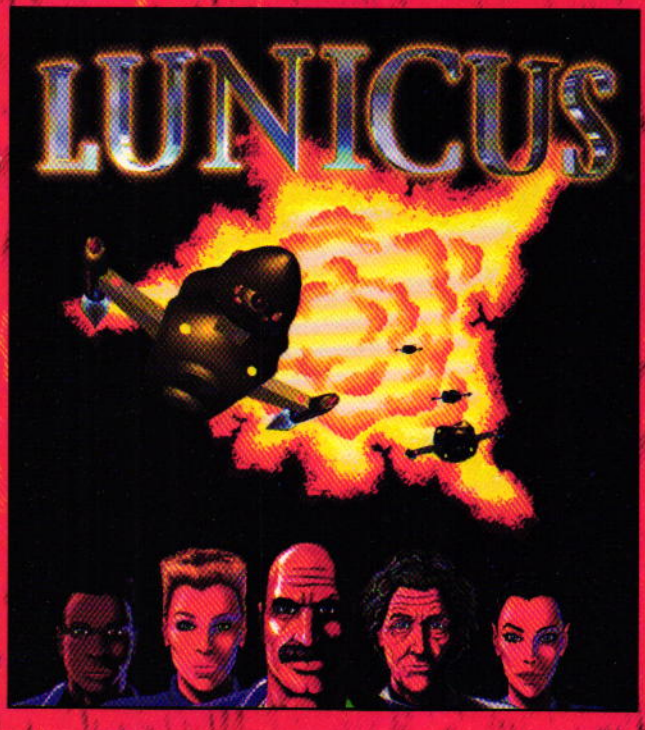
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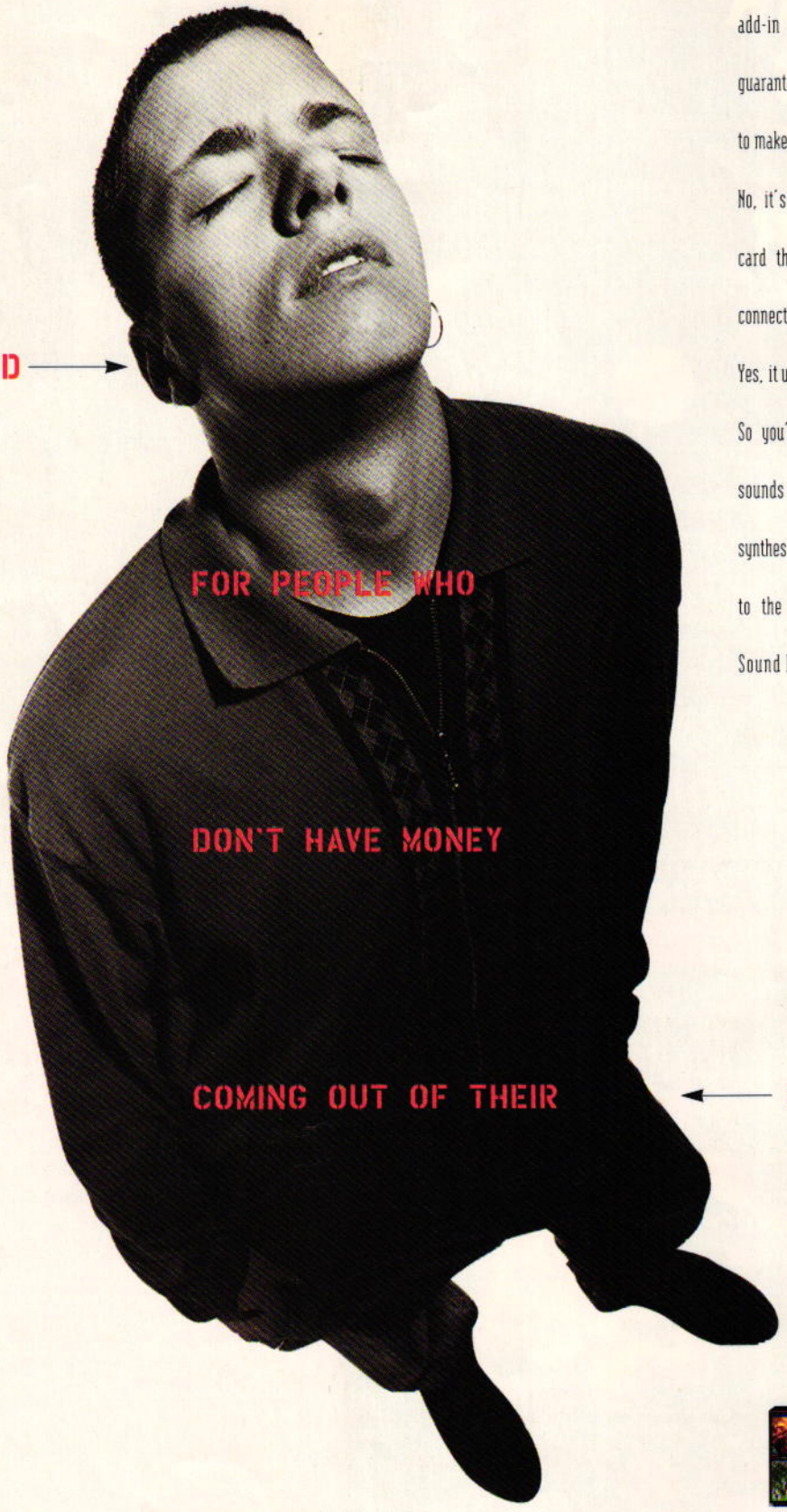
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(Left) The year is 2005. Mortal Coil is the code name of a covert agency of crack undercover mercenaries funded by First World Governments. Its role: to investigate a series of sabotages and terrorist attacks on key research installations. It's brief: to find the terrorists and terminate all of them.
Your team (lead by Candy) is made up of two men, two women and BB (a droid that helps you by offering advice as you play). As the player completes various missions it becomes apparent that the terrorists are, in fact, alien creatures from the future. In their time (2069) their planet is being threatened by human invasion. They have sent a task force back in time to Earth in an attempt to change the course of history. Its aim: to destroy R&D installations and prevent Earth from embarking on a space exploration and colonization programme.
Unlike most games that just use cut scenes to look pretty, with *Mortal Coil* they are used to tell the story and give the player some background information, thanks to a rather clever interactive bit that allows the player to view the same information from different people's view points and perspectives. The overall result is that there are a number of possible endings, depending on how the game is played.

It may sound like the next big thing to hit the Indie charts, but the game formerly known as "Candy" looks as though it might just bridge the gap between the gulf that is *Doom* and *UFO*. Well that's what developer Crush! is hoping. We sent Jeremy Wells to investigate.

IN PRODUCTION

Mortal Coil

CANDY. NOT REALLY A BRILLIANT name for the next generation strategy/shoot 'em up, is it? Luckily, developer Crush! has had the foresight to change "Candy" to the eminently more impressive and hip, *Mortal Coil*. Much better.

So why was it called Candy in the first place? Was it originally a shoot 'em up set in a sweet shop? A strategy-fest spectacular that pitted ruthless *Rolos* against terrible *Twixes*? No, silly. That would be stupid. It was originally called Candy because the game is based on a character called Candy. One mean and moody chic with an attitude; not too dissimilar in appearance and demeanour from Tank Girl. Candy works for the World Super Government as a special operations agent for a covert trouble-shooting agency known as Mortal Coil (hence the new name).

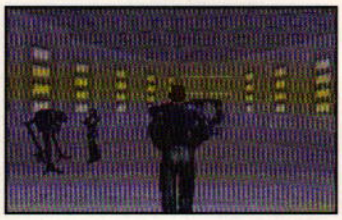
It seems the government is having a bit of trouble with some frightfully destructive terrorists (who, in fact, turn out to be aliens sent from the future – see top right, extremely long caption), so they decide to send in Candy and her merciless band of super-tough mercenaries to sort them all out.

So it's a shoot 'em up then?

Well, yes it is. But it's more than just another *Doom* clone; it's got loads of strategy to it as well. I know that you've probably heard all that before, but this time it's true. Top bod at Crush! and one of the developers, MD Jon Dean, maintains that you can just play it as a 3D shoot 'em up if you wish, and run about shooting everything that moves. But if you want to play it properly and work your way through the fairly intense mission structure, you'll have to come up with some kind of strategy, and develop your tactics.

In this respect it's best described as a 3D shoot 'em up that's gone out to its local, bumped into a couple of old mates (say *Space Hulk* and maybe *SEAL Team*), had a quiet pint in the corner with a bloke he works with (*UFO*, perhaps), spilt his pint over some other drunk called *Doom* and started to talk about football, girls and cars in the corner. They've all piled out of the pub at closing time, completely rat-arsed, and are now jostling for attention at the counter of the kebab shop. You're sitting in your car outside (in your dressing »







(Above) You can play it from a third-person perspective...

(Above left) ...Or the more familiar first-person (*Doom*-like) head-on view.

(Below) It's full of nasty (and very ugly) aliens who get very nasty when you comment on their ugliness.

gown – you got a case of the midnight munchies), quietly eating your kebab, when they pile out of the eatery and start to kick the shite out of your car.

This is a serious mistake 'cos you're well 'ard. You are harder than that hard place people talk about when they figuratively speak of being stuck between a rock and "a hard place".

You now have two choices: the strategic "put your foot down, phone all your mates and dash back to the kebabery *en masse* to kick some arse" choice; or the "dash in, guns blazing approach, where you leap out of your car, wielding a snooker cue and attempt to smash the shite out of them and anything else that moves" choice. The latter might work some of the time – until you encounter some extra tough, lagered thugs or discover that they are, in fact, off-duty policemen. The other choice might take a bit longer, but will probably mean you need less stitches and you might get on *Crime Watch*. You will probably be able to claim on your insurance with greater success, too. *Mortal Coil* is a bit like this.

Errh... So it's like a kebab shop fight?

Well, yes, in a way. But there is more, much more. (*Sigh of relief – Ed.*) Crush! has spent eons developing an AI which is so quick, intelligent and sophisticated that you would think a huge, throbbing brain had crept into your PC and was controlling the enemy. It's all down to a new AI system called VIBE (Virtual Intelligence Behavioural Environment – see boxout again). This VIBE really is very clever because it works out how

Product details

Developer: Crush

Publisher: Virgin Interactive Entertainment

Telephone: 0171 368 2255

Format: CD-ROM

Release date: October

different aliens and groups of aliens would react given the circumstances of the confrontation, and decides whether to fight it out, call in for reinforcements or just leg it. And it's all in real time, so no nipping off for a quick cuppa and a fag while you work out what to do next.

You've also got a choice of views and a movable camera (so you can play it like *Doom* or from an over-the-shoulder view), you can switch to any character at any time, and even split the screen into four and watch what every character is doing at the same time.

And as you're the boss, you can also choose what formation you stomp around in; set up special manoeuvres for bursting into rooms etc, and send your chaps on special scouting missions (by seting up way points), or get them to guard an area or lie in wait to ambush the enemy.

Now all this, you gotta admit, is pretty cool, but when you see the aliens you're up against, you realise that you are gonna need a few good tricks up your sleeve. There are simply loads of different aliens, all with their own particular tactics, special attacks and manoeuvres to battle against. And (thanks to VIBE) they're all intelligent, which means they lie in wait for you, set traps, gang up and generally act very hard. Apart from the Leaders, that is, who hang around at the back, hurling missiles at you and getting ready to leg it at the slightest whiff of danger. The thing is, they don't just run away and hide, they run away and go and get reinforcements, re-group and plan another method of attack. So basically, it's tough, and it just gets tougher. This will not be a game for wimps. Z





It's gotta have VIBE!

One of the key features that makes *Mortal Coil* so damn tough is the rather super Artificial Intelligence system (which was specially developed for the game), known as VIBE (or Virtual Intelligence Behavioural Environment).

Every time a player encounters an alien (or aliens), VIBE works out what the best course of action would be, given the circumstances (ie state of the players' health, weapons available, ammunition, escape routes etc,) and then it acts accordingly. What this means in terms of gameplay is, you actually feel like you're playing against a real person (who plays against you with different strategies and tactics) and not a machine. Every type of alien behaves differently, according to who it's with and what it's been assigned to do, and you'll have to develop your own tactics if you want to beat them.

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Normality







(Main image and column above) The animation in all of the cut-scenes was generated using Gremlin's motion capture studio.

DOOM HAS ONE HELL OF A LOT TO answer for. Up until two years ago (yes, it's that long now) we'd get the odd 3D game here and there, but generally we'd see quite a variety of games appearing on the PC. Point-and-click adventures were always up there in the popularity stakes, but with the exception of products from LucasArts and Sierra, we don't see as many as we used to. Oh no. Now everything is set in a 3D virtual environment and involves you blowing the crap out of everything. Just think of the products we've seen in the last year – every other bloody one of 'em is a *Doom* rip-off; Guns, 3D backdrops and objects that look like cardboard cut-outs. I'm not knocking the Uberlord of PC games, but I just think it's time for a change.

Solid man, solid

And thank God it's finally happening. *Normality Inc.* from Gremlin Interactive has the potential to go down in history as one of those "turning point" games. By mixing the quirkiness and interactivity of a point-and-click adventure with a true 3D "beyond-*Doom*" graphics engine and a huge injection of typically British humour the Gremlin chaps have managed to come up with something which is possibly one of the best products the company has ever produced.

At the bottom of the whole thing is the graphics engine. The game itself I'll come onto later, but in this first bit I want to tell you all about the visuals, as they really are rather special.

As with all fancy new graphics engines, this one has a name – the rather unimaginatively, but functionally titled True3D™. It's special for a variety of reasons, but to the old-boys of gaming, one of the most interesting aspects about it is that it was developed by industry stalwart, Tony Crowther.

Remember him? Back in the old days of the Commodore 64 and the Amiga, you couldn't pick up a magazine without reading about some product or other

Inc.

Point-and-click adventures have been virtually the same ever since the really early days of *Doom* and the original *Kings Quest*. John Davison looks at Gremlin's latest adventure, which blends pointing and clicking with a 3D environment.

Product details

Developer: Gremlin Interactive
Publisher: Gremlin Interactive
Telephone: 01142 753423
Format: CD-ROM
Release date: November

that he'd worked on. Who remembers *Monty Mole* or what about *Captive*? Coming back to you now, is it? In the past few years, though, we haven't really heard that much about him. That, it would seem, is because he's been spending his time developing building clever 3D systems.

Whereas *Doom* and all its pretenders comprise of a texture-mapped polygon-based background with sprite-based objects for anything that isn't the floor, walls or ceiling; True3D™ has, er, "true 3D" objects. Pieces of furniture, for example, are modelled as texture-mapped polygons, and you can walk all around them and move them about, too. Even walls have a certain solidity about them. Most impressively, though, the people that you meet will also look "solid", and this is aided still further by the fact that all of the animation throughout the game has been done with the aid of Gremlin's motion capture studio (which we covered last month in our preview of the company's forthcoming *Actua Soccer*). So, it would be fairly accurate to describe this game as, er, "solid".

"Rather than simply clicking your way through an environment, you can control your character's movements* Doom *style with the keyboard..."

What is normal, anyway?

Set some years in the future, the game sees you playing the part of an unusual young chap who refuses to conform to the normality policy that the authorities of Neutropolis (the city where you live) have enforced. The authorities are actually so adamant about everyone behaving in, what they consider, a "normal' manner, by sitting indoors and watching TV all day, that they even have big, scary coppers called Norm-troopers. The game actually begins just after you've been caught for acting abnormally (the mind boggles) and you find yourself trapped in your flat (cue Vic Reeves song) with a couple of troopers outside your door.

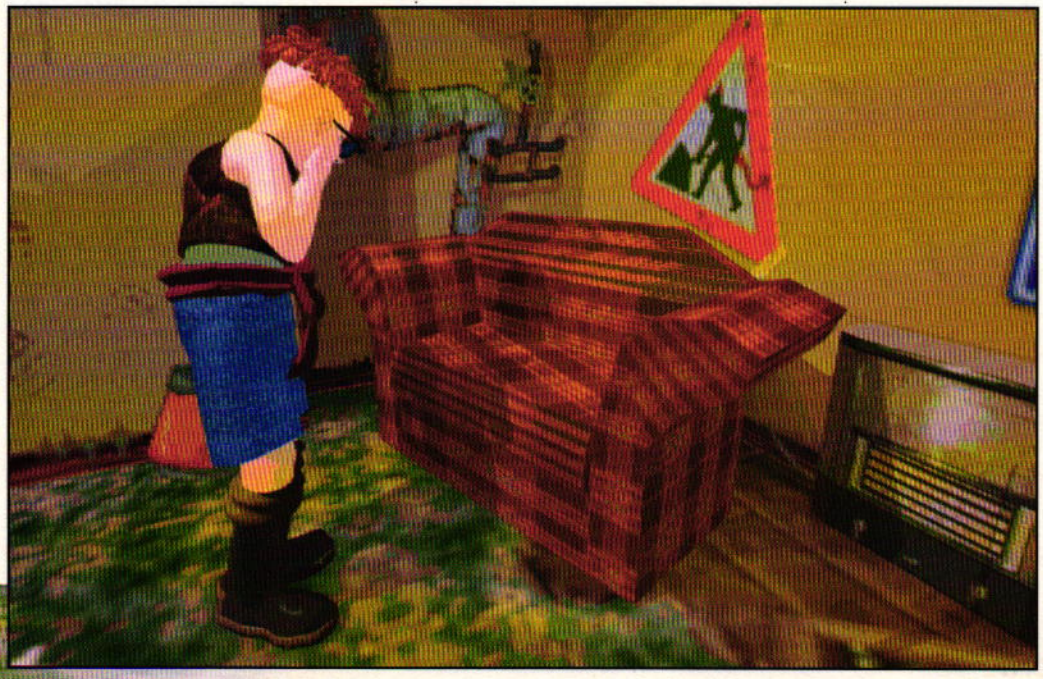
From here on your goal is to get out of the flat and address the apathy of the city. By employing your skills as a day-dreamer, you have to go out into the city, track down an underground subversive group and attempt to inject »





(Left) The 3D objects in the game are some of the most impressive yet seen in this style of game.

(Below) Every time you do something of importance, you are presented with a cut-scene.



FMV-tastic

Every time you perform a particularly significant task, you are rewarded with a brief FMV sequence (of which there are allegedly over 100), which shows the hero of the game performing said task. Big deal. What makes these particularly special though, is that not only have they been rendered up in the usual manner using a 3D Studio/Silicon Graphics sort of thing, but the animation has been motion captured. Making use of what is soon to become Gremlin's infamous motion-capture facility, the main character of the game moves in an incredibly realistic manner. The scenes where you see him rooting around the back of a sofa or jumping out of a window are of a considerably higher quality than the normal, boring rendered cut-scenes that we see in most CD-based games these days.











(Above) The "outsidey bits" give you a real impression of open space.

(Left) All of the objects are true 3D thingies.

« some oomph back into the populace.

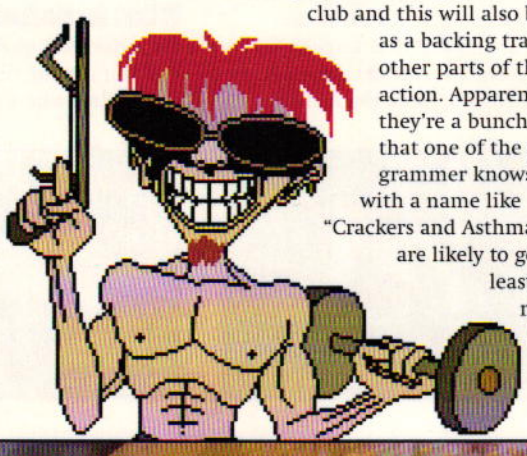
The means by which you actually perform this, involve all of the skills that you would normally employ in a standard point-and-click adventure. You walk around collecting objects and solving puzzles to help you out of various different situations. The only real difference is the viewpoint and the way in which you control the thing. Rather than simply clicking your way through an environment, you can control your character's movements *Doom* style with the keyboard, and interact with the environment by simply clicking on objects and hotspots around the screen.

It all works remarkably well and could well alter the way we see this sort of adventure game in future.

What's next?

Although not due for release until late November, the developers at Gremlin are keen to impress upon us that the game structure itself is already finished. The only changes that are to be made now are cosmetic. The characters that wander around the 3D environment have yet to rendered. There are a few cut scenes to be 3D studio'd up and then there's just the sound. Ah, yes, the sound. The plans for this appear as though it's all going to be rather special as well.

Just like all of the current "old-fashioned" pointy-clicky games, *Normality Inc.* will be a full talkie with all of the characters played by various voice actors. As we go to press there are no plans for anyone famous to be used, but this is yet to be confirmed. On top of this, a band from Sheffield will be recording music specifically for the bits of the game that take place in a night club and this will also be used as a backing track for other parts of the action. Apparently they're a bunch of lads that one of the programmer knows, but with a name like "Crackers and Asthma" they are likely to get at least "15 mins of fame." Z



Flash graphics mode

Just to be a bit different, and to ensure that the graphics in *Normality Inc.* look as good as possible, they are actually presented in a custom graphics mode. Although initially developed to run in both 320x200 and 640x480 modes, the developers decided that the game didn't run smoothly enough on lower spec systems in top resolution. So as a compromise the game now runs in 320x400, which not only looks incredibly crisp, but it also means that the game can run at a very impressive frame rate.

Those of you with a eye for this sort of thing may have noticed a similar graphics mode employed in SSI's *Ravenloft* series of RPG's.



INTERACTIVE MAGIC PRESENTS

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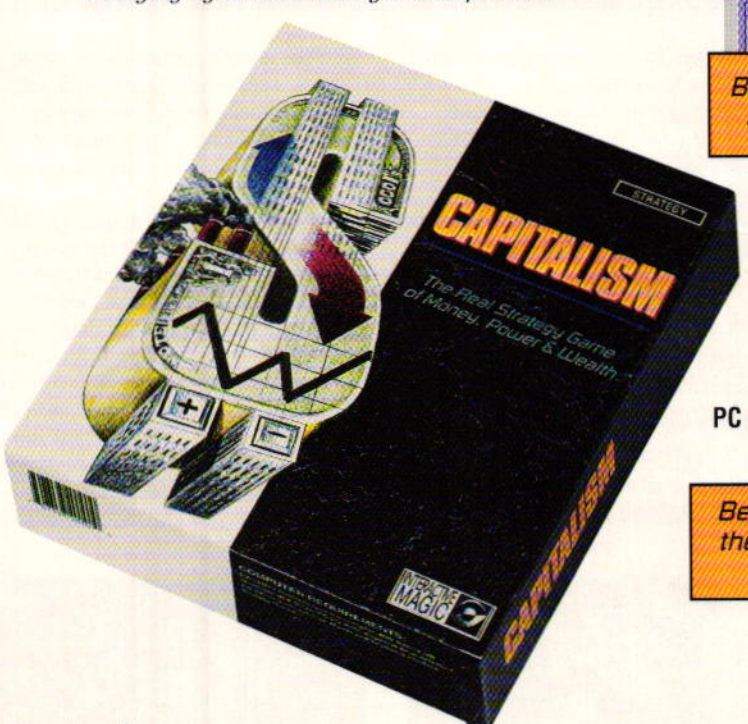
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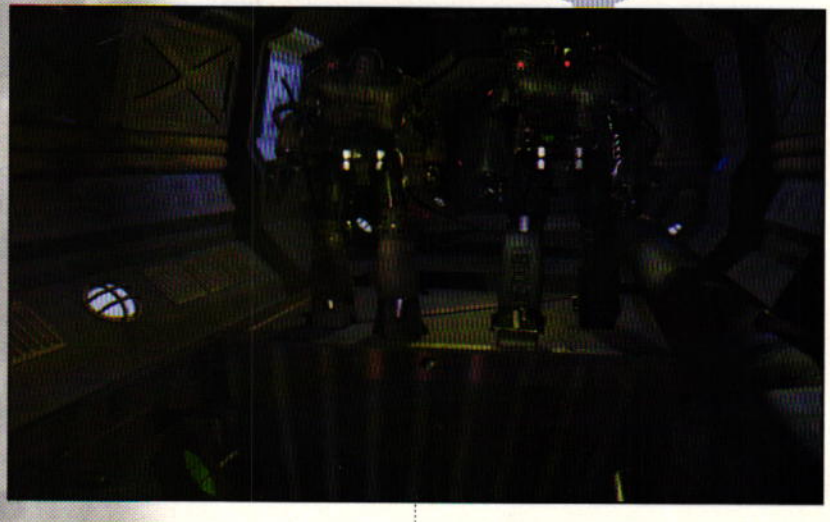
INTERACTIVE MAGIC

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Cryo seem to have re-discovered the ancient art of creating games with actual gameplay in them. Chris Anderson is suitably impressed.

Cyro

(Right) Two blokes from *Aliens* in shiny robot-suit things.



CRYO SEEM TO BE ONE OF THOSE software houses which is always "almost there" in its attempts to combine dazzling graphics with sophisticated gameplay. With the exception of its rather excellent *Dune* strategy game, most of its titles are graphically impressive while being somewhat lacking in the gamely department. *Aliens*, Cryo's forthcoming adventure game, continues its policy of showing how much better French software houses are at producing games with amazing and imaginative graphics than their American and European counterparts. If you thought the graphics in *Dragon Lore* and *Lost Eden* were impressive (I certainly did), believe me, you really haven't seen anything yet. The quality of the animations in *Aliens* is really quite extraordinary. This is partially down to the fact that Cryo is pretty damned brilliant at this sort of thing anyway, but the subject matter of the game has obviously helped considerably to inspire our fave French chappies. Speaking of which...

Spooky spacemen

The game was inspired by the excellent Dark Horses *Aliens* comics, which in turn were inspired by *Aliens* the movie. (The comic book series features the same characters seen in the movie.) This gives the game a very eerie, foreboding atmosphere, and the tension increases the further you progress into the game, as various members of the crew meet their makers in an impressively varied number of nasty ways.

As in the movie, the action in the game takes place on an isolated space outpost (Outpost B54-C, to be exact). Something unspeakably sinister and spooky has come to life. This mysterious entity is apparently so spooksome that even the aliens themselves are afraid of it. Enter stage left, you and your valiant crew members to sort the rotter out. Cue much puzzle solving, looking well-hard and drooling over spectacular graphics by you.

In keeping with the general comic-book feel of the game, all the in-game characters are in 2D and animated in comic-book style. These are perfectly complemented by the stunning rendered 3D SVGA background scenes.

The feel of the game itself is similar to *Lost Eden* and *Dragon Lore*, in as much as moving around prompts short movie-style sequences which show you travelling to the various locations in the Outpost. However, unlike previous Cryo

Product details

Developer: Cyro
Publisher: Mindscape
Telephone: 01444 246 333
Format: CD-ROM
Release date: Out now

(Right) A completely boring inside of a building bit.

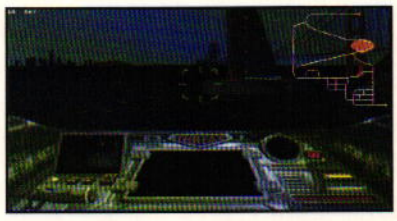
(Right centre) Hey look, it's Cryogenics. Get it?













(Left) I think this alien's a bit pissed off.

(Top right) A nice shooty bit from the *Raven Project*.

(Right) *The Raven Project* designers are obviously big fans of *MechWarrior 2*.

games, character interaction is not simply something you get on with just to get to the next part of the game – the interaction actually affects how the game develops...

No thickie characters shock

Cryo has placed very strong emphasis on the character development within the game, giving each crew member their own personality and characteristics, which you have to assess and manipulate in order to successfully progress through the game. This is something that was sadly lacking in previous Cryo titles. Their characters usually seem to exist purely to serve a single purpose and thereafter outlive their usefulness.

In *Aliens*, you will only get your colleagues to co-operate by carefully considering how to approach them, taking into account the history and personality of each individual character before committing yourself. This results in much more interesting and challenging gameplay.

There is also an arcade section of sorts in the game, but apparently it will be brief, and Mindscape is keen to point out that the arcade element is only there as a temporary diversion and not a major part of the overall adventure.

Hooray for cool adventure games

Generally, *Aliens* is shaping up to be a very smart adventure game indeed. I've always had the feeling that sooner or later Cryo would suss that gameplay is just as important as sophisticated presentation, and so come up with something really special. And from what we've seen so far, *Aliens* looks like being the product to back up my hunch.

"...all of the in-game characters are in 2D and animated in comic-book style. These are perfectly complemented by the stunning rendered 3D backgrounds."

The graphics and sound are superb, the story-line is very strong, and some of the later scenes in the game look positively scary. Obviously, the version we saw wasn't quite finished, but we were given a fairly extensive demo of the game as it stands and it really is difficult to see how they could possibly cock it up at this stage. Therefore, you can reasonably expect the finished version to be utterly fab. However, *Aliens* is not the only product on the way from Cryo that looks like it will be making its way on to your Christmas wish list...

Hooray for shooting things

Cryo is currently working on *The Raven Project*, its first attempt to create an all-out arcade game for the PC. In a no doubt God-given flash of inspiration, the game's developers came up with a plot that involves the world being conquered by an alien race, the people of Earth struggling to survive, and you wading in to sort out the whole sorry mess. I'm sure I've come across this stuff before. Oh hang on, maybe it was when I played the other two million games that use this plot. Yes, that'll be it. Fortunately for Cryo, the tacky scenario will be quickly forgotten when you see the superbly rendered graphics that make even *Cyberia* (Interplay's superb shooter) look positively bland. It has three different types of gameplay: ship-to-ship combat, which has you tearing around gorgeous landscapes, shooting the hell out of everything; a mechanised warrior section, which, er doesn't; and low-level surface warfare.

There are over five different space craft to choose from and the plot is nicely developed with the use of tons of live-action video scenes.

Hopefully, we'll be reviewing both of these products within the next month or two.

For more info call Mindscape on 01444 246333. **Z**







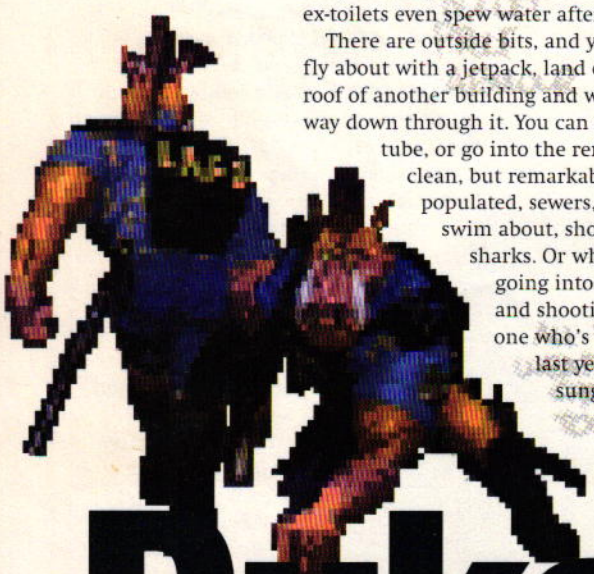




Duke Nukem 3D

IN PRODUCTION

Patrick McCarthy's a two-dimensional character in a three-dimensional world. *Duke Nukem* isn't.



HAD ENOUGH OF 3D, FIRST-PERSON perspective, annihilate 'em ups? Thought not. The latest *Doom*-abee, *Duke Nukem*, tries to give you everything that the original *Doom* gave you and more. Look at the buildings, for example. They're proper buildings, with multiple floors, overhanging bridges, video monitors that you can switch on and use to check out your surroundings... They have walls that can be blown out completely (if the designers have designated them as such), allowing convenient access to outdoor bits, and whole suspended walkways can be brought crashing to the ground. They have ventilation shafts that you can get inside and crawl about in, emerging somewhere else. Anything and everything can be shot or blown up: windows, lights – even the lavatories, which raises the interesting possibility of catching someone in the bog and *really* blowing the shit out of them. The ex-toilets even spew water afterwards.

There are outside bits, and you can fly about with a jetpack, land on the roof of another building and work your way down through it. You can catch a tube, or go into the remarkably clean, but remarkably overpopulated, sewers, and swim about, shooting sharks. Or why not try going into the disco and shooting everyone who's wearing last year's sunglasses?

Dukey get your gun

The weapons are many and various, but some of the more interesting/humorous/dastardly ones are the following:

Delayed action grenade-type things
To use: Place in corner of room next to chicken. Retire to safe distance. Press fire. Watch chicken feathers float down from ceiling.

Shrinker-type things
To use: Point at chicken of whom you disapprove. Squeeze trigger. Chuckle as disapproved-of chicken becomes a poussin. Laugh crazily as you chase poussin and stamp it into a puddle of blood and goo.

Booby trap things
To use: Place on wall next to entrance to chicken toilet. Wait for chicken to enter toilet. Watch chicken feathers float down from ceiling.

Actually, there aren't any chickens in the game. That was just an example.

Product details

Developer: Apogee/3D Realms
Publisher: US Gold
Telephone: 0121 606 1800
Format: CD-ROM
Release date: Late October

outside to watch, then pressing the button and watching the side of the building disappear in a big cloud of vaporised and decidedly singed loo roll. Then you'll be able to see into the building, which is all you wanted to do in the first place.

Basically, *Doom* took the world by storm and will probably never be bettered for originality and fear factor, but the chaps at Apogee and 3D Realms have done everything they can to add features that the other pretenders don't have. They've added humour with the shrinker weapon and the chance to shoot people in the toilets (*excellente*), and the level designer looks like it's worth having on its own. And there's a network option.

"They've added humour with the shrinker weapon and the chance to shoot people in the toilets, and the level designer looks like it's worth having on its own."

Wrecking cruise

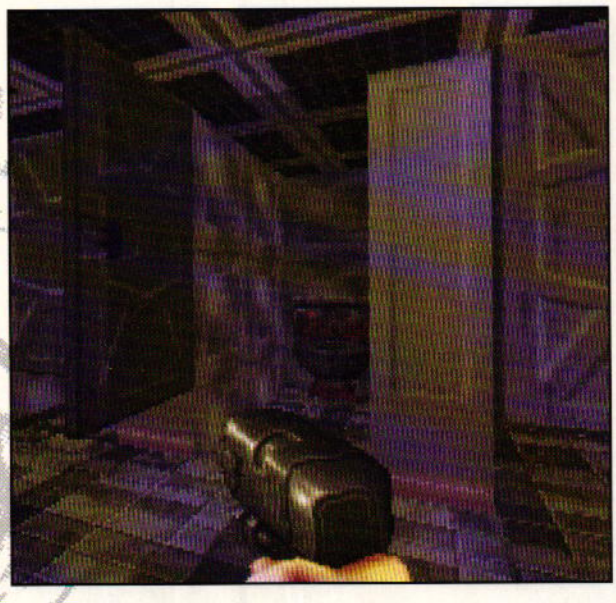
This whole destructible walls thing looks like it might be great. There's nothing to stop you, for example, from getting a lift to the top of a building, placing a bomb in the bathroom, getting the lift back down and going

Stay tuned and we'll let you know how it all hangs together next month.









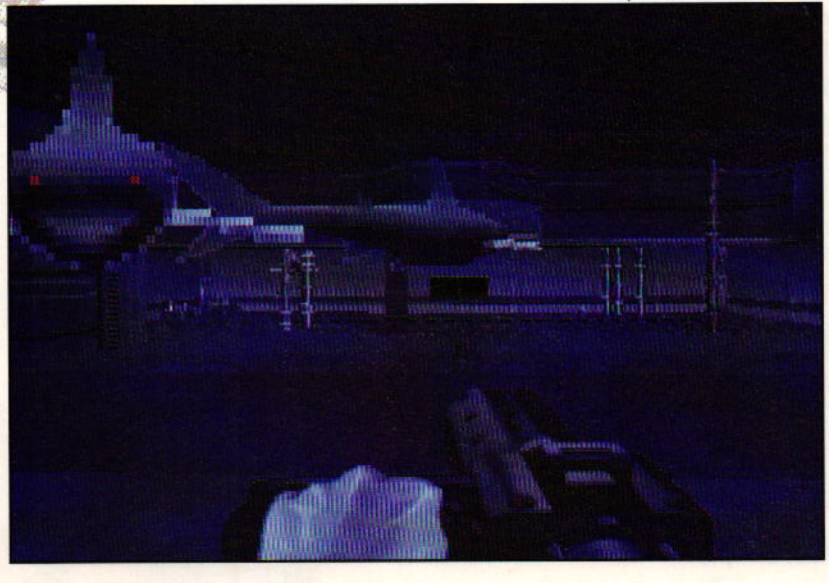
(Above) The levels are quite exquisite, and there's always plenty to see and do.

(Left) Searching for the Captain's log.

(Below) Now this is what you call a shoot 'em up.

(Bottom) Fancy a dip? Splish, splash, splosh – BANG! BANG! You should've seen the one that got away!





Unmanly Network Slaughter

As thousands of journalists have already gone out on a limb together to tell us, dashing about all on your lonesome, shooting the crap out of everything that comes within range of your designer weaponry is all very well. But if a game really wants to impress, it has to have a network option.

Fortunately for opinionated, career-risking journalists and gameplayers alike, *Duke Nukem* has that essential feature. Another opportunity to go berserk and shoot holes in your friends and workmates, without those inevitably messy confrontations with your local Armed Response Unit. And it looks like it might be just that bit better equipped to add something to the genre than most other *Doom*-abees.

Think about it. There are those grenade things, for a start. You might like to leave them in a doorway, or even better, in a corner of the room next to a particularly tasty weapon, and retreat to a nearby video monitor to watch the room. Imagine the harmless fun to be had from setting them off just as an opponent stumbles in, gasping with delight at the lovely new laser, and the cute expression on their little faces when their arms and legs fly off.

And how about those ventilation shafts? You could blow the grille out in one room, jump in and creep through the shaft until you get to another grille. Then it's just a question of waiting inside until one of your mentally-vestigial enemies lurches flat-footedly into the room in front of you, dribbling, at which point you pop out and give them some more holes to dribble from... Think how they'll respect and admire you, and laugh at your cleverness.

Then there are the booby traps. You can stick them all over the place. Across doorways, under toilet seats, inside condoms... the capacity for violent and painful interaction is almost limitless. And so much more satisfying than merely shooting someone.

Basically, you're being given an unprecedented opportunity to taste the pleasure of malicious, dastardly slaughter. You'll find out why the baddies in James Bond films always go to such elaborate lengths to kill "Meeshter Bond". Your friends and workmates will shun you as you gain a reputation for cowardliness and duplicity. The only problem I can see is that everyone will be too busy sneakily sitting in corners, cackling to themselves, to wander about and get blown up.



»

More games than Heidi Fleiss

Duke Nukem isn't the only game we'll be seeing that exploits the new technology developed by 3D Realms. Already there are three other games in the pipeline. Practically before the dust has settled from the rush to buy *Duke Nukem*, we'll be seeing *Shadow Warrior*, which is punchily described as "a supernatural, ninja warrior, mystery-type thing". That seems straightforward enough, but if we're witnessing the birth of a new genre, they might have to think about shortening the term a little. Worryingly for those with a restricted superlative cupboard, it's supposed to be "even better than *Duke Nukem*".



Also well on the way, and scheduled to hit the shops in February '96, is *Blood*. And never was a game more aptly named, based as it is around one man's fight to produce the world's finest black pudding. *(Wrong press release. Ed.)* Ah, here we are. Apparently it's a Gothic horror title with an interesting new approach to power-ups: there's a frenzy mode, which allows you to keep chugging along in a maniacal state for as long as you keep killing people. That should appeal to the London cabbies among you.



No sooner will you have scrubbed down your back steps and put the meat cleavers away, than in March you'll be off into pyramid-land with *Ruins: Return of the Gods*, which is a kind of Indiana Jones-type, first-person perspective adventure. This one is based in the pyramids and, as you progress further, the plot unfolds until you find a huge alien mothership and discover an evil alien plot to suck people's brains out. Sounds like the kind of thing Hugh Grant would pay good money for.

The interesting thing about all the stuff that's coming out is that, although the games will all be published jointly by Apogee and US Gold, they've been developed by different teams, working entirely independently of each other, and should lead to a fair degree of variety in the gameplay. I think I've just fouled my breeches with all the excitement.

DIY level design

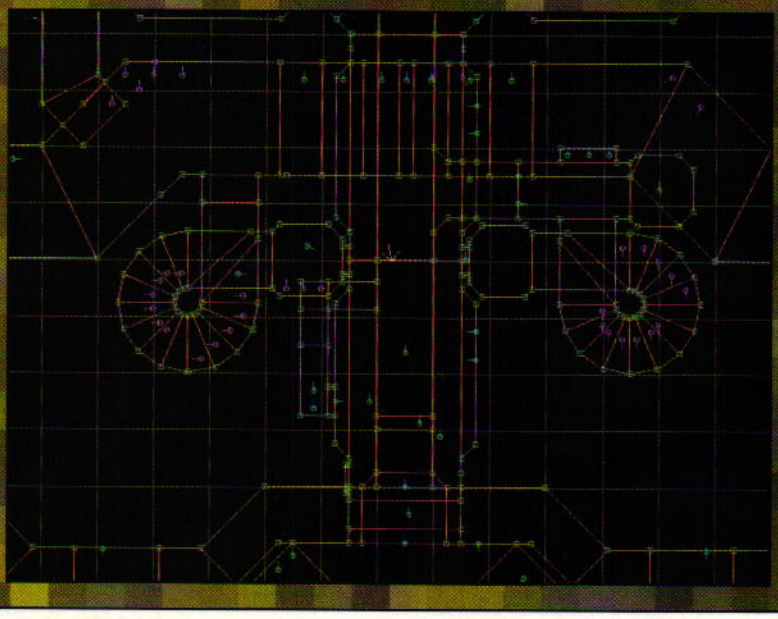
Perhaps the one aspect of the game that the designers are most proud of is the revolutionary new level editor. Like *Doom*, you can sit down and design a peril-fraught arena in plan view, based on the underside of your fridge, or your armpit, or whatever. Nothing new there. But this is where the revolutionary bit comes in... you can go into the area you've just designed and shove stuff about from there, armed with a crosshair cursor rather than a gun, making it a lot easier to realise that you've just spent half an hour making a level based on the inside of your underpants but have put the opening on the wrong side.

Once in 3D view, you can grab hold of a wall and move it somewhere else. You can lower a floor, raise a ceiling, or import a graphics file to decorate a wall – all from within the level itself. And, still within the level, you can call up and overlay a top-down view to make sure things aren't going too awry.

You can change the look of the enemy sprites and your weapons. You can decide how the weapons behave, what they fire, how the stuff that's fired behaves – whether it spreads out and bounces all over the room, for example, or slumps in a heap at your feet – and even what the weapons and missiles look like. You can also import sounds for weapons and sprites alike. You will even be able to decide how elements of the buildings you design react – if you make a wall damageable, then it will disintegrate when shot at; make a bridge damageable and the whole thing will come crashing down.

Basically, you'll be able to edit everything that's in the game apart from the code that runs the game engine itself, and possibly the AI that determines how the sprites react to your presence. It's likely that the level editor will be available as shareware, and will also be bundled with *Duke Nukem*.

Either way, you'll need a registered copy of the game to use it, but the resulting WADs should make even the wildest *Doom*-WAD look tame by comparison.



(Below) If it moves, shoot it, and if it doesn't, shoot it anyway – it might move later!







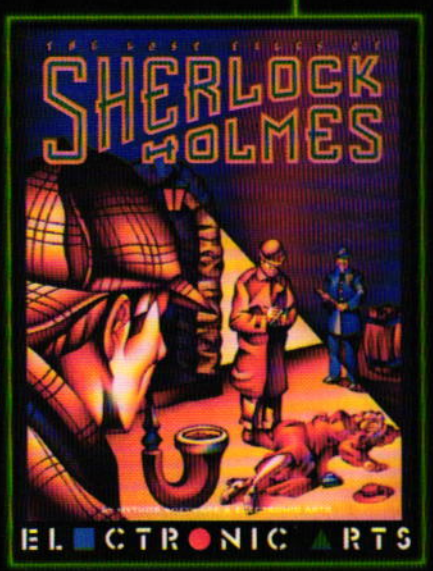
hit names @ hit squad

applying a {{{{{{{feelgood}}}}}}} price tag

"This won't disappoint you."
PC REVIEW

"Sherlock is a bit special."
ZERO





93%



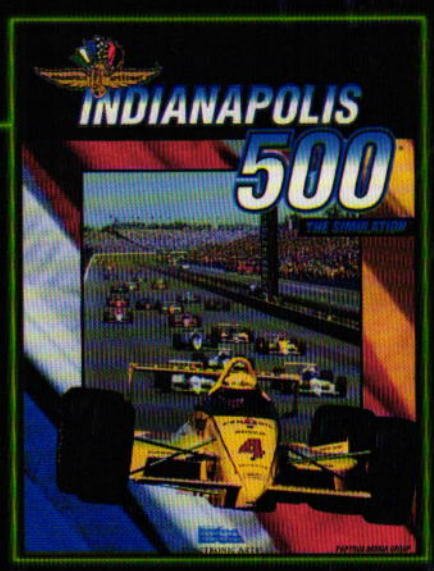
"You ain't seen nothing better - super atmosphere."
"It'll blow your mind... pure action all the way."
RAZE



93%

"The best race game money can buy."

"Gaspingly fast... not for the faint-hearted."



BIG



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Stonekeep

In the second of our long-running and hilarious series "Stonekeep – the Blueprints", Patrick McCarthy actually tells you something about the game, for a change.

THERE ARE GAMES THAT TAKE A long time to appear; there are games that take a bugger of a long time to appear; and then, high above them, peeping out like an extremely high thing across a vast expanse of wittily thought of shorter things, is *Stonekeep*.

Stonekeep is the game that's taking longer to arrive than a eunuch with prostate trouble. We're talking about three years, here. Think what you were doing three years ago – something illegal with chickens, if our readers' poll is anything to go by – and think what you're doing now. Think how your life has changed. How you've moved on to bigger and better things (rockhopper penguins, or whatever). And now think how the poor sods working on *Stonekeep* feel. They're still doing exactly the same thing as they were three years ago. It wouldn't be any surprise to find out that the *Stonekeep* development team has a higher suicide rate than the average Maori street gang.

Special effects ahoy

It all starts with a lengthy introduction sequence (What doesn't these days?), in which you, a boy with a bobbed haircut, a Disney-like lack of charm and an unwholesome regard for animals with disgustingly curly fur, are hanging about in a castle with your disgustingly curly-furred dog, Hairy Willy. Quite what you're doing there isn't altogether clear, except that you have with you a cardboard suitcase full of peanut butter, and the owner of the castle has a waxed moustache and wears bicycle clips over his pyjama bottoms.

Without warning, a darkness falls across the land, fat blerks in vests



(Above) Blimey, it's Kate Moss.

(Below left) Blimey, it's Kate Moss with a sword.

(Below right) Blimey, it's Naomi Campbell. (And her dressing room's obviously not up to scratch).

slump to the ground with a rattle of stripped bones and yay, even the very castle itself is rendered into a rather different state than that which its owners would prefer. Before your very eyes, your faithful dog is turned into something he wouldn't have minded eating only seconds before. "Leave my Hairy Willy alone!" you cry, Mrs Slocombe-like in your grief. Then everything goes black, the traditional filmic denotation of the passing of time.

Hot down-below action

And back you come as an adult and (*looks at bottom of page and realises he doesn't have much time left*) down into the dark and scary dungeon you quickly go, skimming over all sorts of details, your soul tricked from you by the woman from the Friz-Eze advert, who won't allow you back upstairs until you've saved the world.

It's traditional dungeon fare, with corridors to creep down, things to slash at and unhygienic stuff to pick up from the floor. The difference is that the nasty baddies are live-action characters, and since the dungeons themselves are all rendered, we're talking graphical pleasantness all round. Game controls are simple and logical: move with the cursor keys and fiddle about with the mouse. Click on different areas of the screen to bring up a mirror image of your digitised self, an inventory, and a map (once you find it). Click on some food and your mouth to eat it; click frantically with your mouse button in swordfights, and so on.

While *Stonekeep* doesn't have the complexity of movement that we've become used to with the likes of *Ultima Underworld* or *System Shock*, it is full screen and big-boy rendered. And when it's finished, round about the turn of the century I should think, we'll tell you more about it. **Z**

Product details

Developer: Interplay
Publisher: Interplay
Telephone: 01235 821666
Format: CD-ROM
Release date: November

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Looking Back

Terminal Velocity

Software House: US Gold
Reviewed: Issue 30

After complaining that, basically, *Terminal Velocity* was very little more than a very flash-looking shoot 'em up, we have spent some considerable time tinkering with the game and have now come to the conclusion that, er... it's little more than a very flash-looking shoot 'em up. Let's face it, *Magic Carpet* it ain't. It's got some lovely-looking terrain and some cool weapons, but it's not up to the standard of something like *Descent*. The outsidey-bits are rambling and samey, while the inside-bits are just straight tunnels with freaky wobbly bits. Not particularly inspiring at all, really.

US Marine Fighters

Software House: Electronic Arts
Reviewed: Issue 30

After Simon's immortal quote: "If it had a network option I'd have given it 100 per cent," it would be safe to say that our resident propellor head, dearest Mr Bradley, was a bit impressed. However, having seen DID's rather fabulous-looking *EF2000*, we really ought to re-assess what we feel makes a truly great simulation. Yes, *Marine Fighters* looks damn good and the 3D modelling is absolutely stunning, but as far as the way the game treats your PC, it's a bit of a pig. *EF2000* looks a lot better, has far more ground detail, more missions ('cos they're different every time) and it runs nicely on a lower spec machine. Unfortunately, *Marine Fighters* just can't keep up. It's still a bloody good add-on for what is already a bloody good flight simulation, but it won't be remembered for as long as many other products in this genre.

Simon the Sorcerer 2

Software House: Adventure Soft Uk
Reviewed: Issue 30

With a load of big, flashy games hitting the shelves at the moment, with even bigger and flashier budgets, it's nice to see a game that has two rather impressive elements about it. Firstly, it's British (hoorah... get the flags out, up the Brits etc, etc). And secondly, it didn't involve a massive budget and doesn't have anyone famous in it. It's just a good, old-fashioned game – you remember them, they were the things that put playability first. Remember that? You know... gameplay. That stuff that makes games fun? *Simon 2* is absolutely chock- full of the stuff and, despite the odd dodgy joke where the programmer and script-writers seemed to suffer from a sense of humour failure, it is an absolute gem. Here we have absolute proof that the Brits are more than capable of putting together a decent point 'n' click adventure.



Original Oasis artwork is © 1995 Creation Records Ltd.

Original Oasis sleeve design by Brian Cannon for Microdot.

Original Oasis Photography by Michael Spencer Jones

Cool Games

We see hundreds of games over the months but there are a few that we hang on to and continue to play at lunchtime/when we're supposed to be doing more important stuff...

- **Championship Manager 2**
- **TFX2 – EF2000**
- **The Need For Speed**
- **Fade To Black**
- **Doom II (Deathmatch)**
- **FX Fighter**

Crap Games

There are some games that you can leave in the middle of the room with a big sign next to them saying, "please steal me", and you still can't get rid of the bloody things...

- **CyberBykes**
- **Blown Away**
- **World Cup Rugby 95**
- **Action Soccer**
- **The Last Dynasty**
- **Dungeon Master 2**

Reviews Section

ZONE

THE ZONE SCORING SYSTEM

90+ *CLASSIC*
Drop-dead brilliant, fab, skill, top, cool, excellent, almost as good as sex... etc., etc. Virtually flawless in all departments and oozing, yes *oozing* playability.

80–89 *RECOMMENDED*
Rather jolly super, but just not quite up to it in the sexual conquest stakes. More like a good snog really. One of those experiences that's more than adequate all round.

70–79
A good idea that's been reasonably well implemented, but not awfully original. A bit like someone coming up to you and saying "do you come here often?" The sort of game you'd go for if you were pissed... or a bit desperate.

60–69
Just above average, but absolutely nothing to write home and tell mum about. Adequate presentation, mediocre gameplay and failing to make the grade in the originality stakes.

50–59
Averagely average Mr McAverage. Any game getting a score around this mark has absolutely nothing special about it whatsoever and will probably be forgotten almost immediately.

40–49
A just about bearable game which notches up a number of crippling flaws. The presentation ain't hot and the gameplay's worse.

20–39
Naff, and definitely worth avoiding at all costs.

20 and below *PANTS*
Absolute, complete and utter crap. It doesn't get much worse than this and therefore deserves the ultimate accolade... the *PC Zone* big, blue pants award for extreme naffness.







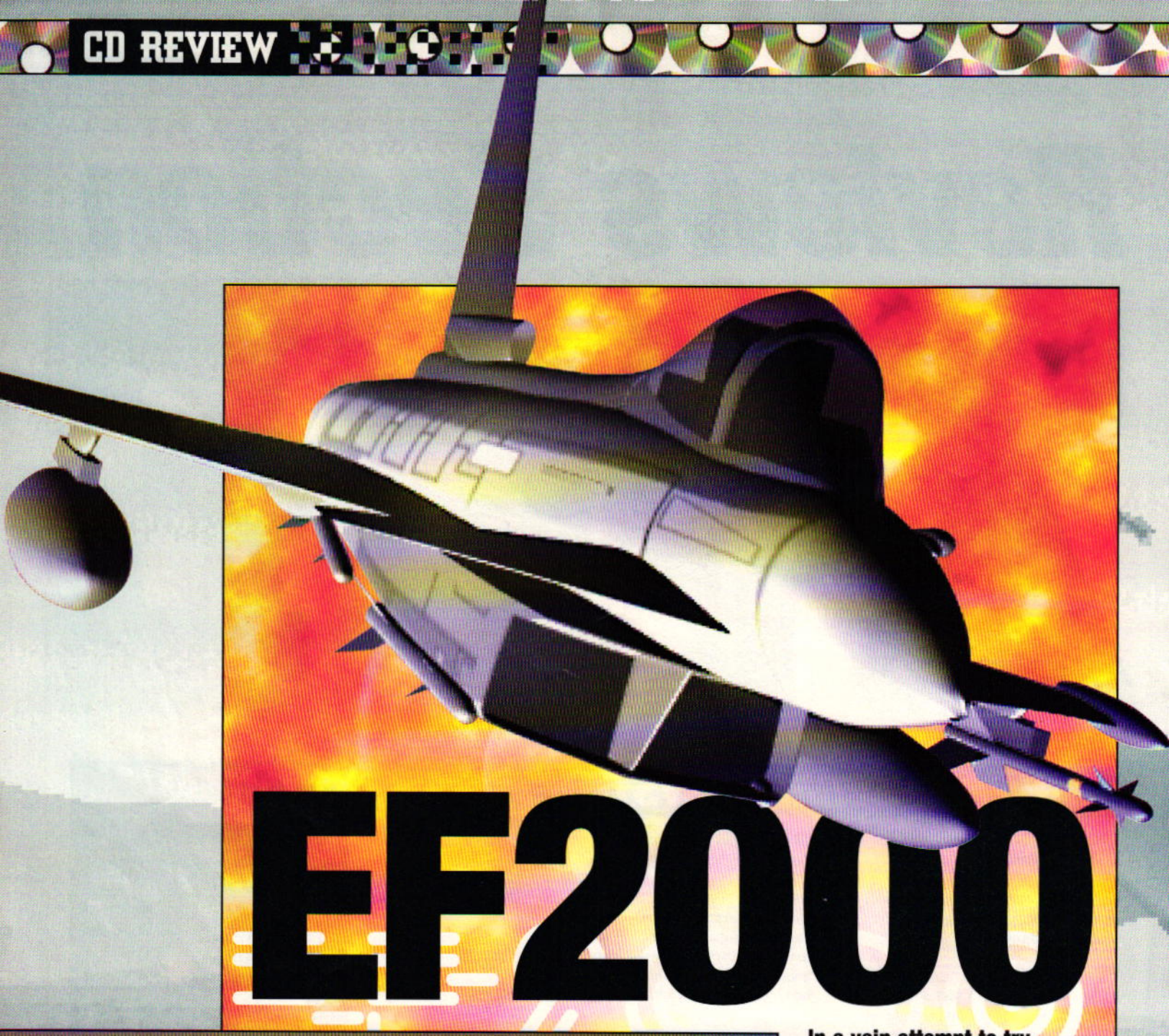
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(Below) *EF2000*: Propellor heads and "normal" people alike will love it.

EF2000



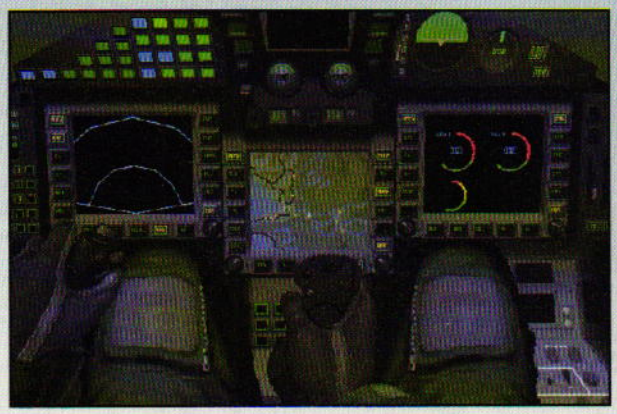


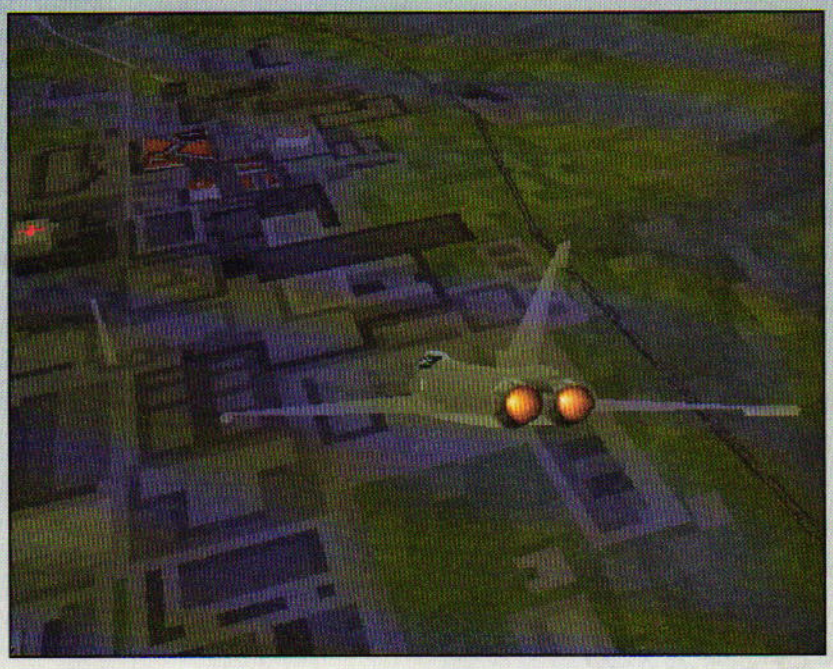
PC ZONE CLASSIC

EXCLUSIVE

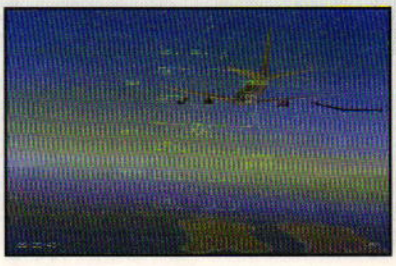
In a vain attempt to try something different we have decided to approach our review of *EF2000* in a slightly different way to normal. Seeing as it's such an impressive game (and we've got the world exclusive on it) we are going to look at it in two different ways: one from the propellor-head point of view, courtesy of Simon Bradley, and the other from the, er, "normal person" perspective, courtesy of John Davison (even though he isn't.)

(Below) The MFDs can be manipulated either by the mouse, or through quick keys. If you're really flash and have the new Thrustmaster WCS, you can use the track ball that's featured on that as well!





(Right) The refuelling sequences in the game are, apparently, incredibly realistic, and we have it on good authority from NATO test pilots that the plane behaves exactly how you would expect it to in these situations.







GAMES PLAYER'S PERSPECTIVE

By John Davison

IT'S QUITE LIBERATING TO BE ABLE TO sit down and look at a game without having to go into all of the techie stuff. We've never really produced a review like this before, so it's nice to be able to just give you my gut reaction on *EF2000*, safe in the knowledge that Simon will be jumping up and down, shouting about the flight model and all sorts of bits and bobs that I've never even heard of.

I'll quite happily come clean and admit that I enjoy flight simulators, but to be completely honest, I'm more a subscriber to the "jump in and then shoot at something" school of thought. Appreciating that everything up to and including the dynamics of the nose-wheel steering mechanism is virtually perfect isn't really my style. While I can appreciate that all of this is of some importance (if nothing else it proves that the programmer's been taking his clever pills regularly), when push comes to shove, it's of no consequence to me when I'm playing the thing. I play flight simulators as though they were fairly complicated games. I'm not really like good ol' Bradders, who knows what it's like to fly real jetfighters and tends to compare virtually all sims to the real thing. Sorry, that's just the way I look at it. And I'm pretty sure that there are a lot of you out there who feel the same way. We all think that being a fighter pilot is the height of glamour (with the possible exception of working on a computer magazine, of course), but it's all a lot of hard work really, isn't it?

Utterly gobsmacked

Since going to see the game at DID for the first time a few months ago, there are now various members of my family, close friends, work colleagues and probably strangers in the pub who wish I would shut up about the damn thing. I don't actually remember the last game that managed to inspire me with such enthusiasm. Sure, my long-lasting relationship with *Doom* has been fairly successful, and the quick fling I had with *Magic Carpet* was satisfying in a wham-bam-thank-you-mam kind of a »

PILOT'S PERSPECTIVE

By Simon Bradley

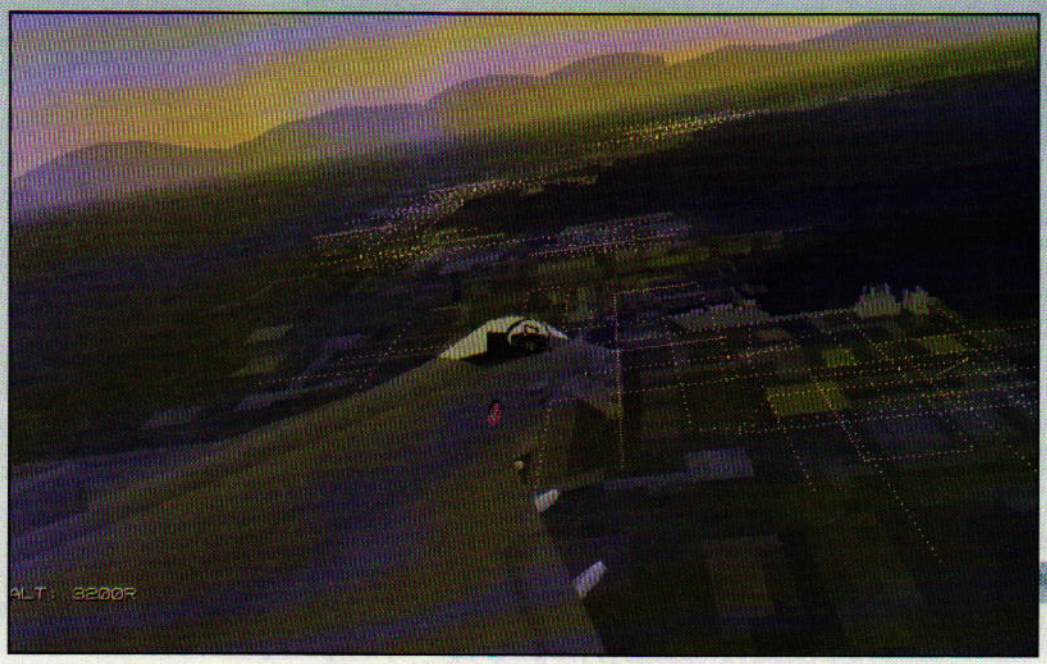
AS A PILOT AND A FLIGHT SIM NUT, I have to say that I was probably in a minority when *TFX* came out. You see, I hated it. I thought the graphics were gimmicky, the sound effects were pointless – I mean, just how many times does a guy have to shoot down this "lizard" character before he goes away? And the music was irritating as hell. Sorry folks, the EFA may well be superbly equipped, but in-cockpit entertainment, it's not on the options list. Sure, it flew Okay within limits, but the weapon dynamics were wrong and the enemy pilots were really not very smart. So, all in all, a hearty raspberry for *TFX*.

Now, it will probably not come as a great surprise if I tell you that I had pretty low expectations when I heard about *EF2000*. In fact, I was looking forward to balancing my recently rather high game scores by really being able to pan something. John's idea about us both reviewing the thing together means that I don't have to ramble on about the whole thing and that I can simply limit myself to the flight perspective. For the record, though, if I was reviewing the whole game, I wouldn't have given it that much of a slagging. In fact, I may even have said some rather nice things about it.

So, how has it changed over its underachieving sibling? Well, John goes into all the fundamentals elsewhere, so all I'll say is that it looks bloody excellent and you can lose the music. That gets some of the easy stuff out of the way, leaving the real meat of any flight simulator – the flight model. Before the non-aviation nuts out there start to glaze over, don't worry, this will be short and fairly painless.

Making your head spin

As far as the flight model goes, this is spot on. Don't take my word for it, they've had input from the Chief Test Pilot on the EFA programme and he reckons it's right. So I guess it is. The EFA is what's known in aeroplane circles »



(Above) Attacking ground targets is extremely satisfying and vitally important in the campaign mode to affect the enemy infrastructure.

(Right) As with the original *TFX*, *EF2000* features a very effective virtual cockpit mode which can be used with a VFX helmet (if the things ever actually come out in the shops).

(Main image, opposite page) The modelling of the different vehicles in the game is fantastic, with an awful lot of attention to detail. Check out this helicopter, complete with full weapons load.





The Story So Far

As with any game that relies, basically, on a hypothetical premise (in this case, a plane that won't see active service until the year 1999), the background to *EF2000* tries to make the game as interesting as possible.

Set in Northern Europe – specifically Norway and a little bit of Sweden – the game has the Russians attempting to take over this area in order to move into the rest of Europe, thus creating a new Communist Union. With Norway under Russian control, Germany, France and even Britain would find it extremely difficult to defend themselves, as the Scandinavian states would be excellent strategic sights for Russian airbases and missile sites.

As the game begins, the war has only just begun, and your job is simply to fly the missions that the campaign generator throws at you. The system that DID has developed for creating the missions is an extremely complex artificial intelligence system that fights the entire war at all times.

Unlike other combat simulators with "electronic battlefield" systems, the war in *EF2000* is something that continues to be fought from the moment the campaign begins. Your role is not as some maverick hero pilot, but simply as a random element in the overall conflict, which involves literally thousands of air and land forces, including fighters, helicopters, tanks and ground-based defenses.

Each time you fly a sortie, the damage that you and your squadron has inflicted affects the overall war and the missions which follow (you always have a large number to choose from, ranging from ground attack to combat air patrol) always take this into consideration. If you blow up a dam it affects the surrounding area; knock out a power station and nearby bases are hindered.



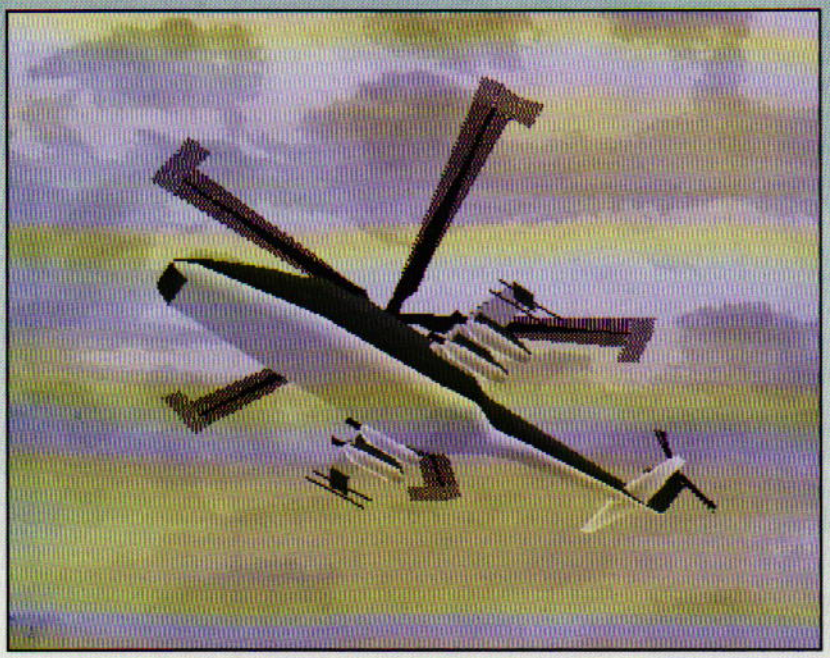
« way. On the whole, though, I feel like I could really settle down with *EF2000*. Unlike many other games, it has so much to offer... it's good looking, fun to play with, offers plenty of depth, an incredible level of artificial intelligence and is terrific in bed... um, er, yes.

Okay, I'll concede that it has a few daunting elements and the manual is the first scary thing you'll come across – it's huge! Heaving the monstrously heavy tome from the box and onto your lap is only the first challenge that this baby is going to offer you. Obviously, being a journalist, I always play a game for at least three days before I even notice that there is actually a manual, but once you dare to open the thing up and take a peek inside, you realise that there's loads of info in there. Not only does it go into some considerable detail about the game itself, but it also tells you virtually everything you could ever want to know about the Eurofighter. This is a serious example of a major toilet-accompaniment manual if ever there was one. Oh yes, and it's got a nice metal cover. Cool touch.

Loading the game up for the first time though, is quite a rewarding experience. After the usual "Hello, look at me, I'm really flash" intro sequence (boring, boring, skip that), you are popped into a very easy-to-use, user-interface, which allows you to choose between arcade, simulator and

« as dynamically unstable. That means that, left to its own devices, it will not behave in a nice way and so has to be kept under control by a selection of computers that would make your average Pentium go green with envy. What this means to the pilot is that she/he can make ridiculous manoeuvres by making use of the inherent instability of the design. So we're talking lightning fast roll rates, snap turns, silly angles of attack and a propensity for really biting your bum when you least expect it. Yes, gentle reader, the high-speed stall, spin-and-Dutch roll are back. And guess what? An unstable aircraft becomes stable when it's Dutch rolling. That means that it's a bitch to recover. In fact, this aeroplane will kill you quite happily as will most of its contemporaries, although most sims forget this. I mean, when did you last get a Falcon to spin? Or a MiG-29 for that matter? The gist of all this is that the flight model is very good across the board, and doesn't seem to have been too severely fudged in the name of playability. Instead, DID has gone down the route of offering options to set up the difficulty of flight; a good thing which more software companies should offer.

Combat seems to be quite good, with the bad guys learning quickly. The campaigns are suitably non-linear, and the







TFX To EF2000... More Than a Sequel?

Although *TFX* was pretty highly regarded when released (even though Simon didn't like it), there were a lot of elements which meant that it was still more a "game" than a "simulator". Okay, the flight model was pretty good in places, but on the whole, it had more in common with *Strike Commander* than with *Falcon 3.0*, partly due to the fact that it dealt with three very different aircraft (the EFA, the F-22 and the F-117a) as opposed to just one. *EF2000* redresses this by being arguably one of the most accurately modelled flight sims ever.

The project's lead programmer Rod Kennedy has, effectively, "built" the plane mathematically in the game, using de-classified information supplied by BAe and NATO. This data, which regards the physical attributes of the aircraft and all its weapon systems, along with the information gathered about how the fly-by-wire system, keeps what is, effectively, a totally unstable shape airborne, means that the model here is about as accurate as you are going to get without sitting in the real thing. It's so real, in fact, that NATO has already signed up to use the product as a ground-training facility for EFA pilots and, amazingly, the game is also being used to highlight design flaws in the real aircraft which are then being rectified by BAe.

The modelling is only matched in terms of quality by the artificial intelligence system that fights the war out at all times (see The Story So Far boxout – previous page). This system is so "clever" in the way it anticipates moves and simulates sorties and battles, that the top-dog at NATO ground forces (amongst others) is rumoured to be commissioning the system for use by the army. Coo!

campaign mode. Now, the best way to talk about these is to discuss them in order of complexity before reaching the huge finale, where I go all gooey about the mission structure and then finally climax when I talk about the graphics.

A game of three parts?

EF2000 at its simplest is the game you find in arcade mode. Designed to be a sort of "*Doom* in the sky"-type arrangement, the game builds various missions which lob you into the sky, with a fairly simple flight model, loads of weapons and tons of things to shoot at. This is the real, base level "game" for propellor head-wannabes who can't be arsed to deal with all the complicated bits like flying via waypoints and actually doing the things you're ordered to.

In simulator mode you can do two different things: you can either jump into individual situations, which vary from basic flying to attacking either ground or airborne targets; or enter training missions which teach all about the weapons, on-board systems and flight mechanics of the plane.

The real guts of the game, though, comes in the campaign mode. This is where you find yourself thrown into the war scenario of the game (outlined in The Story So Far box out), and every action you make is of vital importance to the overall war effort. In short, this really is a quite staggering thing to be involved in. The feeling you get when you roll out and find yourself as one of hundreds of aircraft flying around is quite unbelievable. At different times you can find yourself backing up Tornados, Harriers or even helicopters. »

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb

Processor: 486DX 33 (Pentium recommended)

Hard Disk Space: 3Mb

Graphics: SVGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Keyboard, joystick, Thrustmaster Flight Control System

overall combat and strategy thing is pretty rewarding. Sadly, I haven't had a chance to get it up on the network yet, so I can't really comment on the multi-player options. Stores options are suitably varied and don't behave too badly.

A room with a view

One of the much lauded things about *TFX* was the range of new views which were introduced. Again, I though they were gimmicky and pretty pointless. The thing is, if you have to look around in reality, you only take a fraction of a second. If you have to use the keyboard to look at your left MFD, then it takes several seconds. And if you find the display moves when you knock your mouse by mistake (you need it for the display controls, by the way), then you have to get back to where you were before and that takes more time. While this is happening, Ivan is climbing all over the back of your aeroplane and nibbling bits off with his canon. Along the same lines, some folk like scrolling views as ultimately, they're more realistic, but they're something I find irksome. They waste time and resources and are less effective at doing what you need. But hey, whatever lights your candle is fine by me. Although I have to day that I do think it's a little unfair not to be able to see all the cockpit in sufficient detail to use the radar and threat warning effectively, while still being able to see where you're going.

I guess the long and the short of it is this: for flight and general messing around, the way that *EF2000* does its pilot views is nice, but for combat, especially air-to-air knife fights, it sucks.

The bit where I go all gooey about the flight model

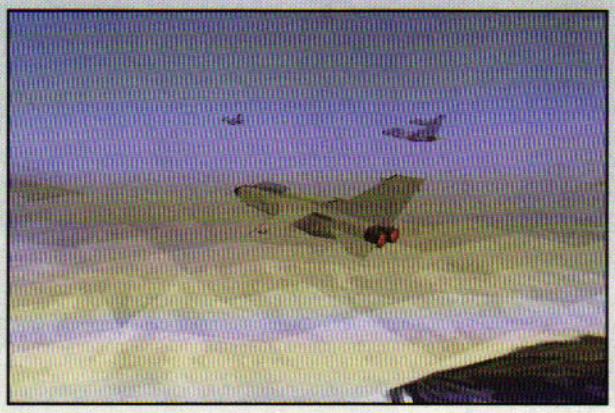
I've already said that the flight model is very good. Let me qualify that a little. The problem with *TFX* was the processing power needed to make it all run at a sweet pace with everything turned up. Well, this looks better, runs at higher »

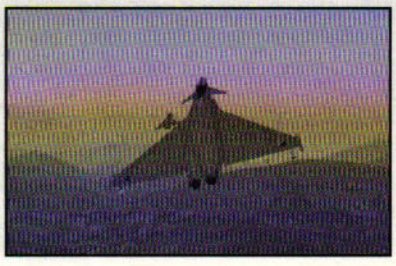


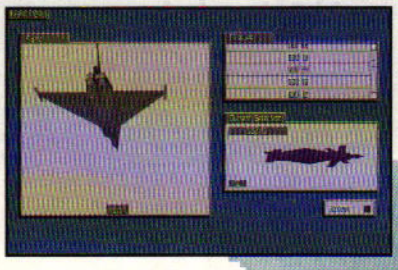


(Top right) Some of the missions have you escorting bombing missions. Although Tornados are more than capable of looking after themselves, the EFA support is vital in an airwar of these proportions.

(Below right) As the wing leader, you can instruct your wingmen to either engage the enemy or change their formation behind you.







« If you've flown any other flight sim then you will know that things always get more interesting when there are more aircraft around, but scanning your radar and realising that, as your EFA's rumble over southern Norway, there are something in the region of 50 Su35s parked just over the next hill is absolutely thrilling.

The bit where I go all gooey about the graphics

Look at it! Just look at it! Have you ever seen a flight simulation that looks that incredibly good? Have you? Okay, Okay, apart from *Flight Unlimited*, but that suffered from the fact that the playing area was roughly the size of a postage stamp. Apparently one of the reasons that Norway was chosen as the playing area (apart from its alleged strategic importance) was the fact that it has so many different geographical features – the fjords, the mountains, the snowy bits and the lush green bits. So in the four million square miles that are "simulated" in the game – yes, I did say four million – you have positively oodles of different sorts of scenery to keep things interesting.

Aside from the ground detail, the aircraft modelling is also rather smart. Everything looks pretty damn close to the real thing and, when you take a peek at the external views of the planes, you can even see the HUD glowing in the canopy. And (this particular aspect seems to get me unreasonably excited for some reason) you even get a lense-glare effect in the external views as you look towards the sun and a heat haze which blurs the graphics when you look at the afterburners!

If I have any complaints at all about the graphics of this game, the only thing I would have liked to have seen would have been more built up areas; when you move in over a city, the only buildings constructed from polygons are those of strategic importance. It's only a minor gripe and I can appreciate that the processing power required would be vast but, still, it would have been nice. Z

« resolution and has a more sophisticated AI. And you know what all that adds up to, don't you children? Yes, that's right. Buying that P120 that you've been waiting for all this time.

Jerkovision made its appearance big time in SVGA on anything less than a P90, and that really buggers up your roll and manoeuvre rates. Fortunately, the game has a 320x200 mode, which runs pretty well on a DX2 (if you have a good graphics card), but to get the most out of this you do really need a ninja-bast.

To sum up then, it has to be said that it's a vast improvement over virtually all the alleged sims on the market. DID has obviously done its homework, both regarding the flight model and what the punters want, and has delivered it handsomely. If you liked *TFX*, this will make you embarrassingly excited. If you thought *TFX* was crap, then you will immediately see a huge improvement, and will probably be impressed. When you first play, you'll be disappointed, but it'll grow on you. Personally, I rate the game part fairly average, but the simulator part is absolutely perfect in every detail bar one (the one being, the way that internal views change). Like I said, if you liked *TFX* you'll love *EF2000*. If you didn't, but like simulators, this will still prove worth getting for the purity of the flight model. Z

Score

97

Something for everyone. The best balance between simulator and game, ever.

Price: £49.99 **Release Date:** November
Publisher: Ocean/DID **Tel:** 0161 832 6633

The Dambusters



As you'd expect, the typical mission in campaign mode begins with you sitting on the runway with the lads. All you've got to do now is take off and then tootle over to wherever it is that the bods at HQ think you should be going.



Send a quick message to the boys... "Alright there chaps? I don't suppose any of you know how Chelsea did over the weekend do you? I've got to update my fantasy football team because Gullit's busted his knee again."



On the way to the first waypoint, you obviously have a bit of a play with all the external views and pause for a moment to admire the huge amount of laser-guided death strapped to the bottom of the plane as the sun glints impressively across the scene.



There it is... the dam. All we have to do now is work out which weapon to use. Oh sod it, we'll just lob everything we've got at the damn thing (ho ho) and hope it goes bang. Failing that, it looks like one of you chaps will have to do the decent thing and use your kite to a bally big hole.



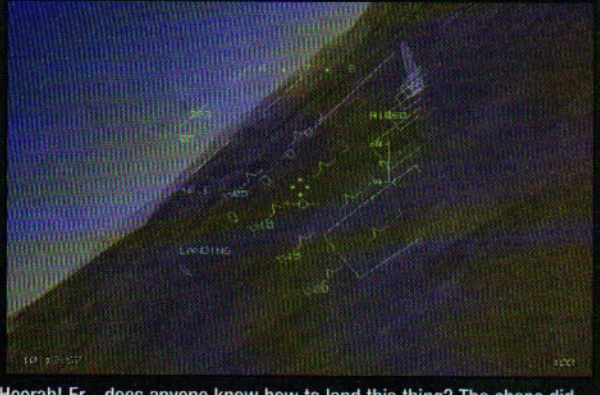
A glimpse down at the map reveals that... er, no... we're not actually anywhere near where we want to be yet. Oh shit. We're supposed to be knocking out a dam or something, but there isn't a single sole anywhere in sight yet.



Er, I'm going to have to pull up in a minute... I hope that thing hits, cause I'm off home now. Now what time did I say I'd meet Debs? And did I remember to book a table at our favourite little restaurant? I just hope cousin Gerald brought the Lotus back in one piece – he's only 15...!

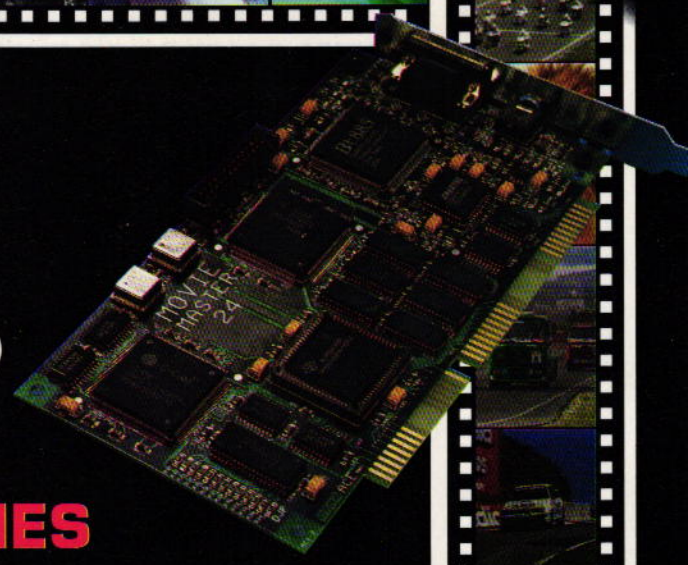


Okay, I'm bored now. Let's whap on the autopilot for a bit and dig out the thermos flask for a quick cuppa before the action really starts.



Hoorah! Er... does anyone know how to land this thing? The chaps did say that I should put my gear down, but I thought this was an automatic.





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(Above) When that circle-sight thingy moves on to you it means you're going to be shot at, so move - quickly!

(Above left) If things get too hot, jump into the nearest teleport device.

PC ZONE CLASSIC

Why do Frenchmen grow moustaches? So they can look like their mothers. Continental corker *Fade to Black*, on the other hand, hasn't a whisker in sight and looks nothing like its mother (the charming *Flashback*). We gave it to renowned Francophile, Toby Finlay, in a bid to foster our famously warm cross-channel relations. *(Oh God. Ed.)*

Fade to Black

I HATED FRENCH A-LEVEL. THIS WAS, IN a large part, due to the fact that one of my teachers was actually French, which is fine in theory (what with being able to hear authentic inflexions and so forth), but in practice, it was like being trapped in an endless episode of *Rapido*. Anyway, attempting one day to gauge the extent to which her inherent chic had rubbed off on my wholly uninterested class, she insisted that each pupil announce the aspect of continental culture that they held to be *le plus* important. I could only come up with syphilis and getting trounced in two wars, but in retrospect I should probably have made some reference to France's games industry. After all, titles such as *Alone in the Dark*, *Another World*, and *Cruise for a Corpse* have given the world rather more pleasure than arms deficits and green willies.

But enough of my scholastic misadventures, and on to the foreign fun-fest in question. Though *Fade To Black* has been much publicised as the sequel in all but name to *Flashback*, the games are so disparate that this isn't really worth dwelling on. Whereas *Flashback* was an impressive, yet hardly classic, platform-based arcade adventure, *FTB* (as we shall call it henceforth) is... well, is a great number of things, which we will get to later. In the meantime, rest assured that you don't even have to have laid eyes on *Flashback* to get the most out of its "sequel"; it's pretty much independent in every way. Even the storyline stands alone quite neatly.

About that storyline...

Well, the scenario-brief that I was given was, frankly, a little thin. Okay, I'll be honest. It was crap.

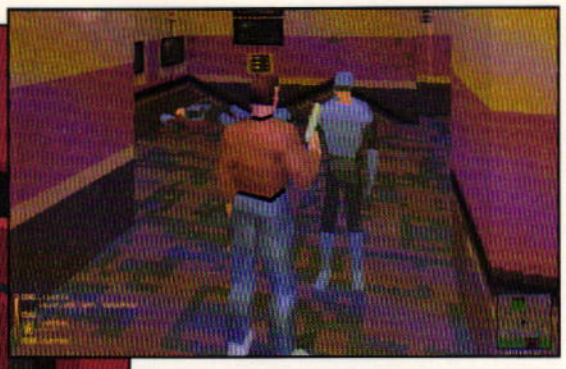
(Below) Mighty morphin' ugly lizard dudes abound on most of the levels. Not all of them look this pretty, so watch out.

Viz: the solar system in 2190 AD is "in the clutches of an alien race; a race beyond control." Yikes! Who can they be, these 'orrible monstrous incarnations of incomparable evil? The Morphs. The bloody Morphs, I ask you. Now as far as I'm concerned, Morph is that small, brown geezer who used to squeak at Tony Hart. You know the one: he looked like a jobbie with arms and legs. So we've been overrun by an army of galactic plasticine turds. *(Shut up and read the rest of the story. Ed.)* Er, oh yes. These Morphs of the future are able to resemble any shape they choose, and not only number twos - sort of like the villain in *Terminator 2*, only organic instead of robotic.

It's them you have to thank for your status at the beginning of the game: as Conrad Hart (presumably a distant relative), you are banged up in a high-security prison compound on the moon. All of this is presented in a gloriously moody intro sequence, which concludes with a fellow prisoner charitably blasting your guard's head off, slipping you a few bits of equipment, and then roping you into assisting his covert rebel operation, the Mandragore.

It is amongst this parcel of goodies that you receive details of your first mission: to recover a camouflage device which is





Tech specs

Memory: 4Mb

Processor: 486 DX2 50Mhz

Hard Disk Space: 6Mb

Graphics: VGA, SVGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Keyboard, mouse or joystick

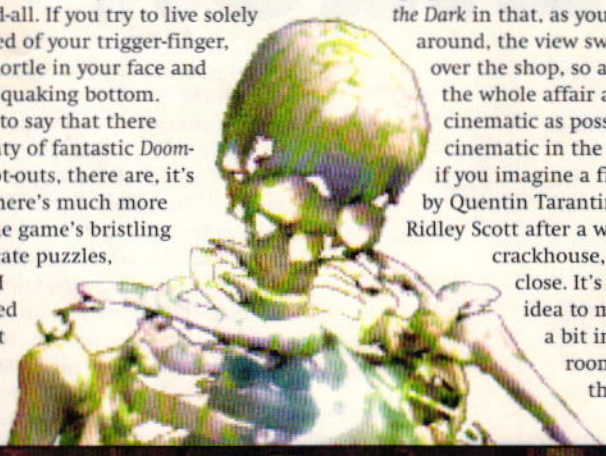
« stashed in the infirmary. Fortunate, then, that you have also been given a gun.

Let's go to work

Not so fast. Your weapon, though a vital tool of the trade, is by no means the be-all and end-all. If you try to live solely by the speed of your trigger-finger, *FTB* will chortle in your face and whip your quaking bottom. That's not to say that there aren't plenty of fantastic *Doom*-esque shoot-outs, there are, it's just that there's much more besides. The game's bristling with intricate puzzles, and those I encountered on the first level alone were infinitely superior to any in *Flashback*. However, before you get to grips with these, you need to come to terms with the game's interface. For it has to be said that, at first, *FTB* could conceivably be a mite confusing.

It employs a similar system to *Alone in the Dark* in that, as you walk around, the view sweeps all over the shop, so as to make the whole affair as cinematic as possible. Well, cinematic in the sense that if you imagine a film made by Quentin Tarantino and Ridley Scott after a week in a crackhouse, you'd be close. It's a good idea to move about a bit in the first room so that the seamless altering of camera angles doesn't later leave you panic-stricken at an inopportune moment. Attempting to flee from a gigantic alien when the monitor appears to be on hallucinogens takes a bit of getting used to. But worry ye not: it soon becomes second nature and unnecessary to visit the lavatory every time Conrad turns a corner.

Actually controlling him in his rather breath-taking environment, though, is easy – much easier than my instruction manual seemed to suggest. It provided a lengthy list of key commands for performing different actions, which was, for want of a better word, bollocks. All you need is the cursors and a few others for jumping, shooting and using things. And that's only if you opt for pure keyboard control; you can use a mouse or joystick as well. I found a sort of combination to be the best bet: the keys offer the most precision for movement, while the mouse (obviously) makes selecting all those bits and bobs from your inventory as simple as Nigel from *EastEnders*. It's possible to play solely via the mouse, though I found the constant need to click on icons a bit of a pain. However, I did manage to get well and truly stuck into the game despite the



(Above) Puzzles start off easy and then get quite difficult pretty quickly. You'll have to master the control system and learn to leap to the right place at the right time if you want to get anywhere..

(Above right) "Avez-vous seen where ils have put mon Teddy Bear?"



(Left) Character control is top class – he leaps, he crouches, he runs, he stops to talk to strangers.

(Below) Even the save game feature is super slick – those Frenchies have done it again.







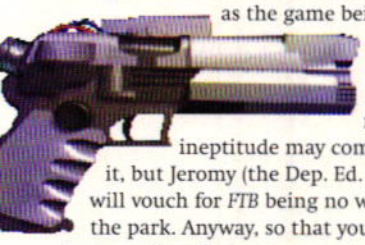
(Left) This is a baddy – you can tell that 'cos he's got a big gun and red eyes. Pretty mean lookin', isn't he?

(Above) Level design is varied and always very detailed. Here our hero in the white trainers is about to get to shot at (again).

shoddiness of my pre-production instructions, and even though the text and speech in the review-copy I was playing were entirely in French. *Quel* tribute to FTB's accessibility, *n'est-ce pas*?

Mon petit journal

That's not to say I was any good at it, though. It's not so much me being crap, as the game being jolly tricky. Well, alright, my ineptitude may come into it, but Jeromy (the Dep. Ed. no less) will vouch for *FTB* being no walk in the park. Anyway, so that you can have an idea of what to expect when you gleefully boot the CD, I present thus, a small record of my achievements and reflections during my first few forays.



Attempt One: Who wants some? Who wants some? Ha ha! Look at me as I strut around my newly-unlocked cell, a-drawin' and a-holsterin' my trusty nine-shooter. I've got unlimited magazines (because these are bog-standard bullets; you can find upgrades, but they're in short supply) and I'm going to bally make sure the furniture knows it. Hey, chair, you talkin' to me? Are you talkin' to me? Well I don't see anyone else in here... *(For God's sake, get on with it. Ed.)*

swings around behind my head and I aim straight between the floating git's metallic eyes. Three shots later, he's a molten puddle. Hur hur. The infirmary is on level two, but for the time being there's only one way to go... and it leads straight into the path of an alien who

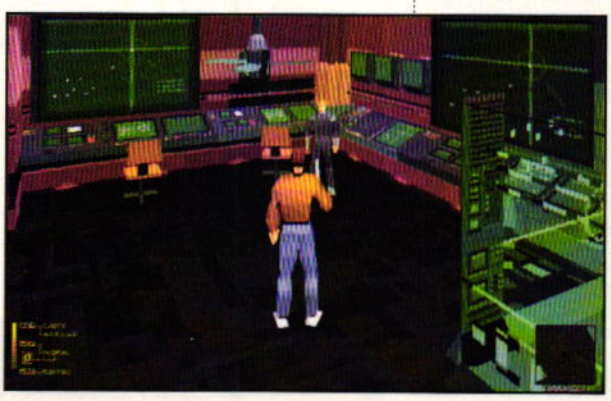
"The graphics are deliciously fluid. Light ebbs like a moonbeam in cloud; shadows flow like the seeping pools of night... it is uncommonly fine."

Ahem. Okay, walk up to the door and it automatically slides open. Out we go into the hallway and – shit! – the radar's popped up... I'm being gunned down by a droid. Er, er, er, shoot – quick!... no, missed... um... Arse. I'm dead.

Attempt Two: Alright. Out of the cell, pistol at the ready. The view immediately yells out some expletives (in French, to add insult to injury) and then promptly hurls a small arsenal at me. Cue attempt three...

Attempt Three: This time the alien scum buys the farm. I take a couple of hits (I, er, went into battle with an empty gun and wasted a few seconds »

(Below) Back at the *PC Zone* offices our hero attempts to find out just who's got such a bad vibe with the Fabulous Frenchies.



Duckin' and a Divin'

It's not all rolling around the floor trying to make big knee holes in your jeans, scuffing your white trainers and pretending to be Bruce Willis. No, there's flying bits in it too. About two thirds of the way through the game you'll come across a bit where you jump aboard a hover ship type thing in which you have to navigate your way through a rather difficult twisty-turny tunnel-like bit. A bit later still (quite near the end in fact) you jump aboard your speedy hover ship once more and have to shoot things as you fly down another tunnel type bit. It's a dirty (difficult) job, but someone's got to do it.









reloading) but I'm still in one piece. The Morphs are mean opponents: give them a chance and they'll melt into a green puddle which oozes along the floor until it engulfs you. After a wee bit of wandering around, I discover the kitchen. I accidentally shoot the chef (sausage fingers, eh?), but don't worry; he was a cunningly disguised Morph. Sadly, his friends in the next room fail to appreciate the comedy of my unintentional gunnery and re-acquaint me with the Game Over screen.

Attempt Four: Sod this. Time for a cigarette. What a crap game. But in mid-sulk and mid-smoke I find myself once more drawn to Conrad and his plight, such is the game's irresistible allure. Right. It's time to do some damage; I'm going for gold –and if that bast Henry Kelly pops up, I'll make sure he gets his, too. I find the infirmary and get locked in a blazing exchange of laser-fire with a seemingly endless army of Morphs. I dive behind a crate for cover, with rockets whistling past my head, and just manage to sneak into a nearby doorway. It turns out to be a lift. The room above is dark and cavernous, but I can make out some pipes on the far wall – that's how the Morphs get from level to level. If I could destroy those, I'd cripple their access to the room below; then I could explore the passage beyond. Right. Time for another cigarette. What a cool game.

(Above) It's that bird out of the *Rough Guide* without her shades on! Blimey! lovely pair of eyes – she should get 'em out more often!

(Above right) Same brown leather jacket, white trainers and blue jeans. In France, some things never go out of fashion.

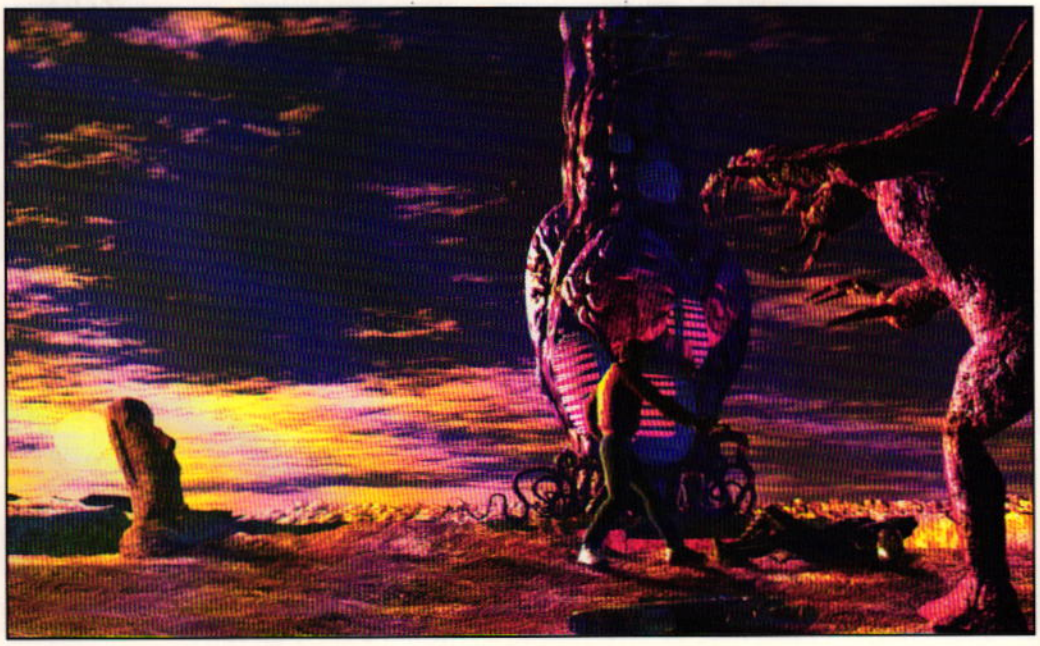
(Below) The intro and cut scenes are fab – even if they do look like a Salvador Dali pic.

Better than sex

Well, possibly not, but aesthetically *FTB* is enough to give any PC gamester an extremely large erection (for boys anyway, I'm not sure what girl's get, I've always been too busy playing games, you know how it is...) *(Get on with it. Ed.)*. In almost every issue of *Zone* these days there's a review which is forced to say something like, "Think these screenshots are pretty? Wait till you see them move!" and this one's going to be no exception. The graphics are deliciously fluid. Light ebbs like a moonbeam in cloud; shadows flow like seeping pools of night; and the delicately crafted polygon world tears around like it's got a firework up its bottom. Sonically, too, the game makes its thunderous mark: there's speech a-go-go, immensely satisfying explosions, and disturbingly intense music which changes in pace in accordance with your situation. You can even hear the pervy heavy-breathing of Morphs around the corner.

You may be under the impression by now that I've developed an affection for *Fade to Black*, and, by jiggery, you'd be right. It is uncommonly fine. In fact, it's the best game I've played since *Elite II* – and *Elite II* was my all-time favourite. Yes, it can at times be frustrating and unforgiving, but it is more often immensely enjoyable and rewarding.

Fade to Black is a game which we must thank for its sheer, dazzling brilliance, and curse for rendering it difficult to hate the French. Z



Score

94

Sans doute, les testicules de chien.

Price: £44.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Electronic Arts
Tel: 01753 549442



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Dodge Viper RT/10
It's American, so it gets the best write-up. Hooray for Mom's apple pie and bombing slant-eyed gooks.



Porsche 911 Carrera
The faster version of the car now being flogged down your road by that desperate ex-property dealer.



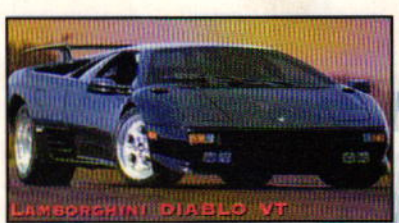
Chevrolet Corvette ZR-1
As featured in the song by Prince (only he was probably singing about the old, less ugly one).



Ferrari 512 Testarossa
Testarossa is Italian for "Red Testicle" – that's why they're so hairy.



Lamborghini Diablo VT
Bring back the Miura, we say – it's much less like an oversized air-conditioning unit.



Mazda RX-7
RX stands for Really eXciting... (snort). As if anyone's going to choose to drive this.



Honda Acura NSX
NSX stands for Not So eXciting... and it's even less likely to be chosen.



Toyota Supra Turbo
Another Japanese thing with a lot more extras than the average British saloon.



PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

The Need

THE NEED FOR SPEED WAS WIDELY acclaimed on the 3DO, but that was mainly for its graphics. For as a racing game, it lacked that certain something – most noticeably, a sense of speed. Aptly named, then. But speaking from memory, this one looks better than the 3DO version, and is a lot quicker, too.

The point of the game is, like people who get excited about shiny motor cars, very simple: put your didget to the widget and zoom about with as much care for the consequences as if you were a police patrol vehicle approaching a school crossing.

The need for leads

There are eight "super" cars to choose from, and you can race single races, time trials (boring and pointless, given that your times are saved in races anyway), head-to-head and tournaments (which is the same as a normal race except that when you finish one tournament, you go up to the next class and start all over again). There's a network option to race against your chum, complete with a chat mode so that between stages you can tell them that they're hung like a shrew and smell like a ripe Chaume; obviously, this is the best thing about the game.

There's an in-car view and two trailing views to drive by, and considerately, if you have the in-car view selected, it switches to an external view in the event of a collision, so you don't miss any of the flick-flacks. It's action-packed stuff, especially once you come up against other road users and your local bobbies in patrol cars.

The police feature is a tad disappointing. You can go screaming past one of their cars at 170mph, ramming it and generally being naughty, but if it manages to overtake you (after you've crashed, say), you come to a polite stop, sit there and take your speeding ticket, instead of zooming past when it stops, or running the rozzer over when he approaches the car.

The need for enormous crashes

Crashing is well done. When you hit a delivery van at 202mph, you really hit it – you don't just stop for a few seconds, miraculously right yourself and zoom away. No, you somersault off other cars, ricochet off parts of the scenery, bounce onto your roof and scrape along upside down, belching smoke. *Then* you miraculously right yourself and zoom



Patrick McCarthy doesn't often feel the need for speed. He's more of a snuff man.

for Speed

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb
Processor: 486/66
Hard Disk Space: 3Mb
Graphics: VGA, SVGA
Sound: All major sound cards
Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick, Thrustmaster T1

away. It's a bit of a shame, this part. They could have had the car looking progressively more knackered with bits falling off, or its performance affected by all the hammering. But they don't.

Helpfully, there's a replay function for watching your exploits in full, or you can just view the highlights. The computer decides what the highlights are, but fortunately, it seems to enjoy spectacular pile-ups as much as anyone else.

The need to whinge

So it looks rather lovely and it crashes nicely, but there are things that don't feel "quite right". For all its graphical splendour, it sometimes doesn't play a lot differently to those old Amiga-type games that had your car moving from side to side on an endlessly streaming





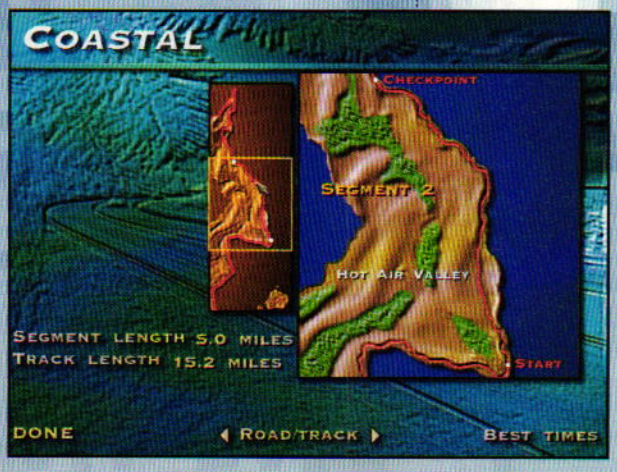


(Left) Burn some rubber!

(Bottom) You can't race without a track. Unless you race on a road. There are three of each to choose from, with the road routes subdivided into three "segments". Clearly the town planners of America have no regard for people who wish to change direction, as there are no turn-offs or intersections on any of the roads you'll race on.

stretch of road. You never actually feel that you hit the scenery – you hit an invisible barrier instead. And when racing, the simulated high-performance sports cars change direction about as quickly as the Ark Royal, making it difficult to take sharp corners at speed.

There are high-res modes, and you can adjust the detail settings for slower machines. Above all, it's a good laugh, though not a classic in the same way as *F1GP* or *IndyCar*. The cars can be flung about at low speeds, and from a standing start (with a bit of hammering on the accelerator and a lot of direction pad wibbling), you can virtually write your name in rubber on the road. And you can do handbrake turns, reverse and crash spectacularly. But the racing itself tends towards the arcade rather than the sim. If that's what you want, fine. But wait until you see *Screamer* to compare the two. If you want a pure racing sim with stunning looks, the imminent *F1GP2* may be more your bag. This is somewhere between the two. Z



The Need for Multimedia

One of the big "enhancements" of the PC version is the multimedia bit: clicking on the cars in the window brings up a section designed for those misfits with a liking for nylon driving jackets to dribble on. Thank Christ for CD-ROM, eh? Without it, we'd be stuck with just games. To make sure we're properly respectful of expensive things, the voice talking about all this seems to be that of God.

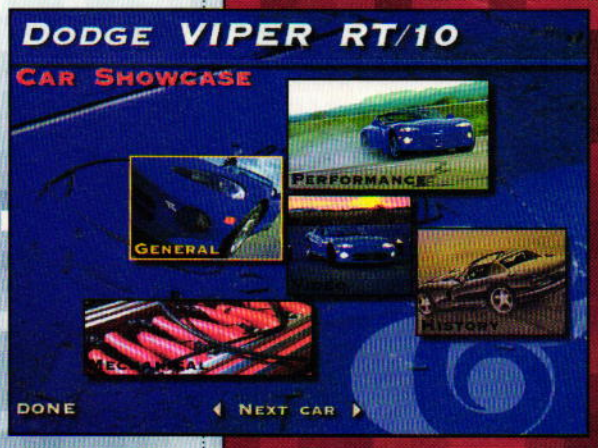
Video shows shots of the various cars, close-ups of lights and chrome bits, etc etc, with MOR rock guitars mweeeeheeeehhhhhhhhr-ing all over the place. This is the point where true enthusiasts will probably masturbate.

History shows how most of the cars looked a lot nicer 30 years ago.

Mechanical has pictures of engines plus fascinating info about carburettors, compression ratios and torque.

Performance tells you all about how quickly the car accelerates, its top speed, and how long it lasts if you wear your leather one-piece.

General is about weight, dimensions, petrol consumption and price. As if anyone who spends all their time playing computer games can afford one of these cars, and as if they're going to worry about petrol consumption if they do.



Score

89

Good crashes, nice backgrounds, and some sexy policemen in tights.

Price: £44.99 **Release Date:** September
Publisher: Electronic Arts
Tel: 01753 549442

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Apache Longbow

PC ZONE CLASSIC

When Simon Bradley heard about the new helicopter simulator from the same stable as *Tornado*, he made all sorts of unreasonable offers so that he'd be allowed to review it. We'll be getting beers off him for months...

UP UNTIL NOW, THERE HAS BEEN nothing on the market that could really claim to be a real helicopter simulator. Sure, there were plenty who tried, but when it all boils down to it, even the better ones were lacking, although at least one looked superb, but was aerodynamically challenged, to put it mildly. So people like me were forced to get our fixes in the wilderness of fixed wing flight, where our needs were pandered to far more effectively. Alternatively, we had to do the unthinkable and get a life. But now something wonderful has happened. A company has noticed our plight and taken pity on us. A real helicopter simulator is here at last. But is it as good as it claims, or will it prove to be another pale pretender?

So what's the score?

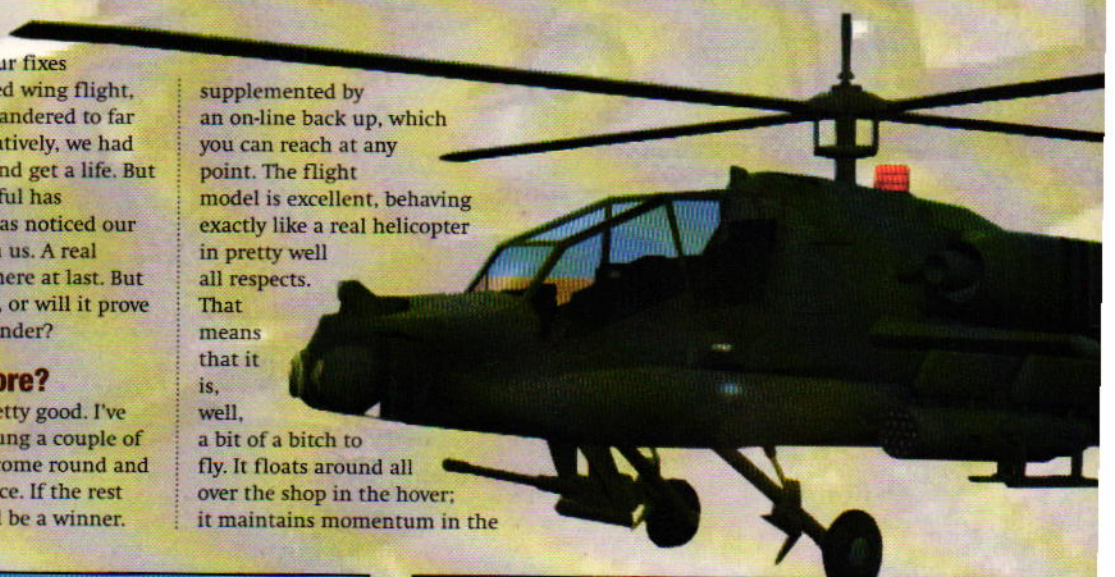
First impressions are pretty good. I've just picked myself up, rung a couple of mates and got them to come round and look at the intro sequence. If the rest looks half this good, it'll be a winner.

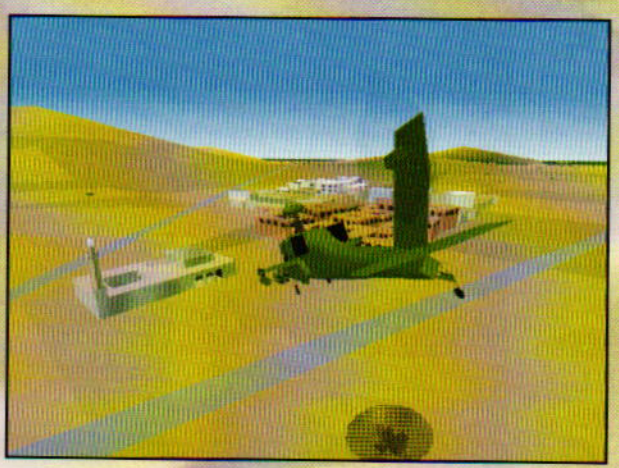
Jump into the game in true *PC Zone* tradition, ignoring all the manuals and the dire warnings therein. Hey, I can fly a real helicopter – this should be a piece of piss, right? Well, not exactly. After a few exploratory crashes, it's time to RTFM (that's: Read The Effing Manual) and go back to basics.

First things first, *Apache Longbow* is a pretty high-end simulator. For sure, some liberties have been taken here and there in an attempt to make it more player friendly, but ultimately we are talking a walkover in the realism versus playability rating. The manual wouldn't make much of a coffee table, but it is supplemented by an on-line back up, which you can reach at any point. The flight model is excellent, behaving exactly like a real helicopter in pretty well all respects. That means that it is, well, a bit of a bitch to fly. It floats around all over the shop in the hover; it maintains momentum in the wrong direction in the turn; it fights you in the roll (and worse still, in the recovery); and it goes all peculiar as it builds up speed and moves into transitional lift. In other words, it is a home from home for me and any other rotor head.

We want some background

Gee, I thought you'd never ask. Well, the original *Apache* was hailed as the ultimate helicopter gunship when it first hit the skies in the mid '70s. By the time Uncle Sam had got around to buying the thing, it had got far heavier, more complex and







(Right) Although not exactly texture map-tastic, the quality of the polygons is superb.

(Far right) All of the graphics have a sharp and crisp SVGA-ness about them don't you think?

budget that even the Channel Tunnel consortium would've been embarrassed. But, at last, it came into service just in time to see the collapse of the Soviet Union, and with it the real threat it was designed to counter. But the Americans are an inventive bunch after all, and they soon managed to whistle up a little scrap in the Gulf to prove the value of their new toys.

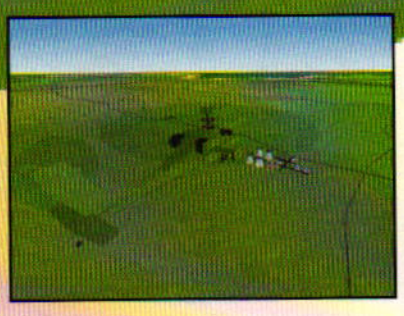
Among the things that the Gulf War showed was the fact that, contrary to popular belief, it *is* possible to provide some excellent news footage for your friendly neighbourhood CNN team using the on-board video equipment.

Very shortly after the Apache entered service, the brass in the Pentagon sussed the fact that Europe had pretty crappy weather most of the time and that a blind firing facility might come in handy. The fact that there was no longer a real threat in Europe didn't matter, of course. Thus, the Apache Longbow came into being.

Fundamentally, all that was done to the original Apache was a major system upgrade to cater for the millimetre wave radar on top of the rotor mast. This increased weight further, of course, so an engine upgrade became necessary. The result is a helicopter which is capable of fighting day or night, in any kind of weather, in any terrain you like. Now there's no doubt that the Apache Longbow is a very nice piece of kit, and, in fact, Her Majesty's Government thinks so highly of it that they've just ordered a load for the new Army attack helicopter programme.

(Above) The Longbow is so advanced that the army is supposed to be ordering loads of the things.

(Right) Look dead 'ard, don't they?







When do I get to kill?

Soon, very soon. Of course, this is a highbrow sort of flight simulator, and as such, there is a clear and distinct learning curve along which you, the eager student, must travel in order to achieve your rotary nirvana. Or something like that. Anyway, there are a load of training flights in which the only thing that's trying to kill you is your helicopter. I'd earnestly recommend that you follow the training programme before "going live", otherwise you're gonna get fed-up with being offered the option to retry a failed mission again and again and again... But when you do reach an operational squadron, a veritable blastfest awaits you...

Your Apache is a heavily-armed beast, and there seem to be precious few rules of engagement to hold you back. So its out there and kill, kill, kill. Well, maybe not. You see, like I said before, this is a simulator. That means judicious use of brain as well as trigger finger is needed to even survive a mission, let alone achieve your goals. That means looking at the map, and really thinking ahead. Of course, it also means blowing seven bells out of the opposition.

What about the weapons?

Anyone who has played any helicopter simulator, anywhere, will be familiar with the weapons provided on the Apache. You got your standard Hellfire laser-guided anti tank (or anything else) missiles. You got Stinger air-to-air missiles. You got 70mm rockets (two different types). And, of course, you have the 30mm chain gun as well. But here there is a difference – you also get another version of the Hellfire; this one being radar guided, fire and forget, with a range of about seven miles. I don't know what it's like in reality, but it's pretty bloody effective here, I'll tell you. Of course, lighting the bad guys up with radar like a Christmas tree does tend to let them know you're around and that can be more than a little bad for your health, but as missiles go this is certainly a pretty damned handy sucker to have around.

Tell us about the missions

There are three fundamental types of single-player game here: single mission, instant action and campaign. The instant action missions are arcade-style shoot 'em ups with no tactics other than staying alive. You have infinite weapons and get a score for everything you kill. This is the least challenging part of the game, but is still quite good for a cheap thrill.

Single missions offer a bit more of a challenge, but the real core of this simulator, like *Tornado* before it, is in the campaigns. Here, the difficulty of each mission is directly affected by your performance on earlier flights. If you failed to take out the mobile SAMs three missions ago, they'll be there to hassle you now. Similarly, if you do really well on an early flight, you'll have a sudden lack of opposition later on during the campaign. You have the facility to change as much of your pre-generated mission plans as you wish – change weapon loads, move waypoints, anything, in fact, other than changing the mission objective or enemy activity. You may think that this means the mission planner from hell is lurking inside your PC. Well, you're at least partly wrong. It isn't exactly intuitive, but once you get used to it it's Okay. The really good news is that you don't have to do this at all; you can just accept the default weapon load and follow the pre-set waypoints, do the target and return. It's really up to you. You will be flying with any number of friendly helos of almost any type, and it really is worth reading up on the theatre notes to make sure you don't take the simulation too far and start icing your own troops as well in the heat of the moment.

As far as your fellow aviators go, by the way, don't expect too much from them in the way of brains. They won't deviate a hundred yards to trash that AAA site, waiting for you to come limping back. In fact, they won't engage anything other than the designated target unless it fires at them.

How does it look and feel?

Let's be honest – *Apache Longbow* is not going to compete with *Comanche* or *Ka50 Hokum* on the graphics front. But then, neither of those games can compete on *Apache*'s realism, so it isn't *that* one sided. The graphics are al' right in a slightly dated sort of way. That's not to say they're no good, simply that they are slightly old hat. Everything is quite clear and crisp, and the light sourcing seems to be pretty good. But shadows are distinctly weak, and the whole picture seems a bit too angular for reality. Having said that, you can get as close to an object as you wish, and there is no sign of it becoming even a little bit blocky and distorted, so maybe there is some sense here. And the sounds give you bags of atmosphere as well.

As a counter to the less than perfect graphics, control is wonderful. There is no other way to describe it. This is really very good indeed. All the systems seem to function just like the real thing, and weapons have their limitations, again just like in reality (although the guys from McDonnell Douglas will try to tell you different). Your gunner says useful things (except in some network games, which I'll come to later), and even air traffic control seems accurate.

By the way, if you're cleared to land, have a good look around before going in. There is nothing more frustrating than completing a tough mission only »

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb RAM

Processor: 486DX 33 (Pentium recommended)

Hard Disk Space: Minimal

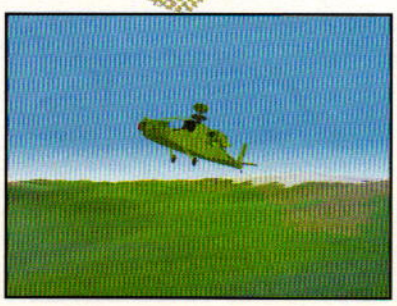
Graphics: SVGA

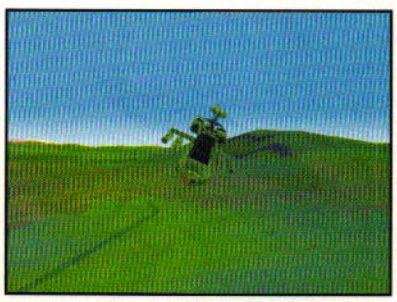
Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Keyboard, joystick, Thrustmaster

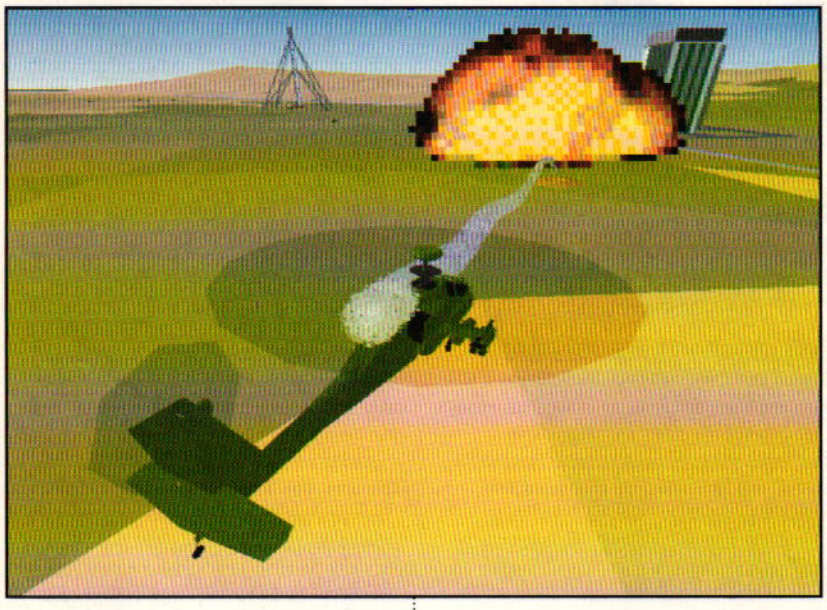


(Left) The Longbow is a two-seater helicopter and can be flown from either seat – pilot or gunner.





(Right) There are loads of different views, and the 3D modelling is quite stunning.





(Left) The missiles are all modelled pretty well. They're not as accurately produced as those in *EF2000*, but hey! What the hell?

(Above) The pre-rendered cut scene bits all look remarkably realistic.

(Below) Although basically an update of *Tornado*, the ground-based graphics are very crisp.

« to crash and burn back at base when you go for the same spot as another chopper. Rotor to head – checkmate.

Now, the Apache is a two seater, and as a single player, that means it's the nightmare interface from hell – like *Tornado* and *Fleet Defender*, right? Well, no, actually. A gunship helicopter can be flown and fought from both positions. Okay, so the gunner gets all the fancy aiming equipment and the pilot gets all the decent navigation gear, but basically you can work from either cockpit and still stay alive. DI has cheated a little in single-player mode and made some systems accessible from the pilot's seat, which should really be the sole domain of the gunner, but I certainly ain't going to complain.

Networked Nirvana

Digital Integration – Shock, Horror, Probe – actually seem to have listened to its customers. One of the big gripes about *Tornado* was that, frankly, its multi-player facilities were pretty shite. All you could do was go head to head against another Tornado using a serial link – dog slow and about as exciting as watching concrete set. *Apache Longbow* certainly addresses that and then some. As well as the normal serial/modem (yawn) links, you can also connect up to 16 of you in a head-to-head helifest. But best of all are the co-operative modes. Yes, I know it's dull if you're like Macca and feel that the only good network player is a dead network player, but the whole thing works so much better if you have a wingman who actually thinks like a human. So far on offer are leader/wingman, an old favourite which still stands the test; and pilot/gunner, a new twist on the arrangement first seen in *Strike Eagle III* but miles better.

Although it is true that the aircraft can be flown and fought from either seat, having two of you in the same cab makes for a more realistic and intense experience. What it means is that one can concentrate on avoiding the ground while the other deals with the nitty gritty of servicing the target. Now, sadly, DI has elected not to offer the chance of an eight-ship, 16-player network game, as it only supports this in two-player mode right now. But here's hoping.

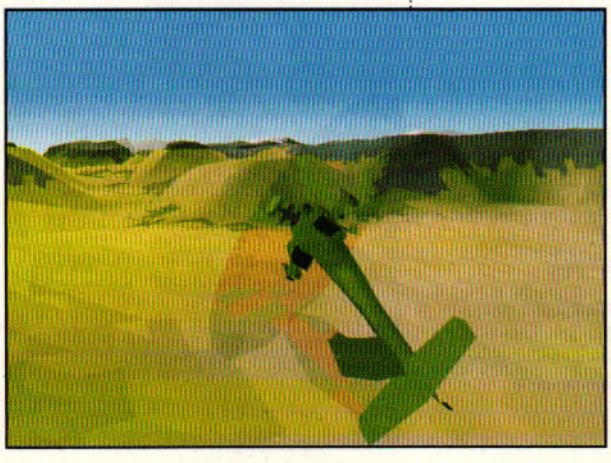
In Perspective

There aren't many chopper games around and there are even less good ones. How does *Apache* fair against the competition?



So in a nutshell

This is probably the best helicopter sim that will come on the market for a long time. It is the rotary equivalent of *Flight Unlimited*, and that is praise indeed. There are things on the market which look far better – *Comanche* for example – but nothing can match the mixture of spot on handling, tactics, networking, atmosphere and just all round goodness. This is really bloody good, but the emphasis is on simulation. If you're after an arcadey action game with a helicopter in it, this is not for you. Even in arcade mode, the flight model is still the canine's cluster, and the systems still work like the real thing. But if you have the slightest interest in helicopters and want to get an insight into what goes on inside the twisted mind of a combat chopper pilot, buy this. In fact, buy two, a couple of NE2000 cards and some thin wire and get networked with your mate. Then crank everything up to maximum realism, take on the world as pilot and gunner to understand why helicopter pilots think jets are simple. Z



Score

96

For Propellor Heads:
Only principle keeps this below 100.

Score

80

For Normal Folk:
Dated graphics and a bit intellectual.

Price: £39.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Digital Integration
Tel: 01276 684959

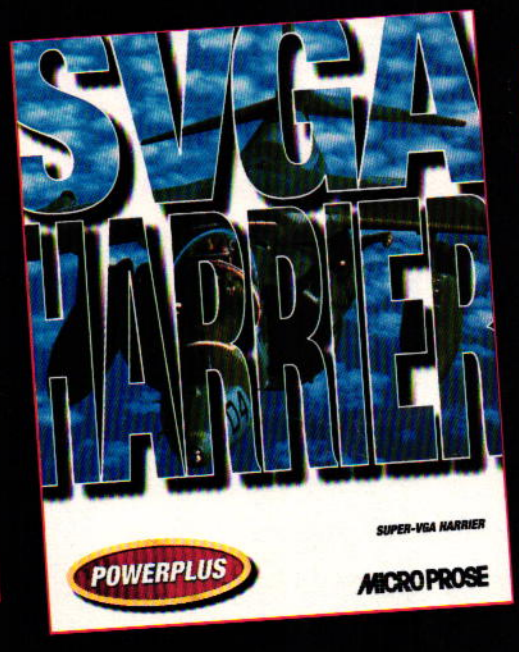
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WIN! WIN! WIN!

To go along with our flight simulation-themed issue this month, we are pleased to be able to offer all you propellor heads out there a really rather superb prize. Thanks to the bods at DID (the clever chaps responsible for *EF2000*) and Thrustmaster, we can offer you a complete flight control system worth over £600.

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Rules
All entries must be received by October 1st 1995 and no correspondence will be entered into... so, for God's sake, don't call us. No relatives of Dennis employees are allowed to enter and neither is anyone who works for, or is related to anyone who works for DID or Thrustmaster.

(Circle the correct answers)

1. Which aircraft is the new game from DID based on?
   a) Eurofighter 2000 b) F-22 c) Tornado

2. What was the prequel to *EF2000* called?
   a) PDQ b) TFX c) RGB

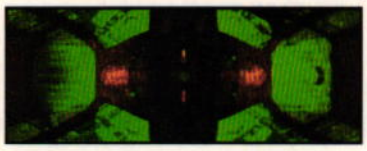
3. What are those things that are human, but aren't the same as boys, called?
   a) Aeroplanes b) Trains c) Girls

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Paul Presley wears flared trousers, crushed velvet suits and platform shoes. You can finish this joke yourselves.

Buried In Time



(Above) Certainly beats the days of pulling a cord and hearing "My spider-sense is tingling," and "Anyone call for a web-slinger?"

SEEING AS I ONLY HAVE A SINGLE page on which to wax lyrical about the sequel to *The Journeyman Project (TJP)*, I'll not waste it by wibbling on and on (in my usual way) about the state of the interactive movie, the over-use of pre-rendered imagery, and how Hollywood is moving ever closer to the computer game. No, what I'll do instead is just hit you in the stomach with the knowledge that US Gold is soon to release a "Director's Cut" version of the Macintosh-saving prequel, and kick you in the short and curlies while you're down by predicting a trend to soon follow with every other game manufacturer in the US.

Expect to see the widescreen version of *BioForge*, the Special Release of *Full Throttle* with 30 minutes of missing exploding rabbit footage, and the obligatory re-mastered copies of *First Encounters* with all-new bugs.

(Below) Say what you like about the design of futuristic TVs, I'll still be surprised if you can pick up Channel 4.



Back in the real world...

In the meantime let me tell you that *Buried In Time* has everything you're expecting it to have – the usual top-rate levels of American professionalism and hours of pre-rendered animations – but alongside that is a fairly sophisticated game. Criticism was hurled like stones at a heretic, at *TJP* for being pretty to look at but non-too interactive with regards to the gameplay. At first glance you'd be forgiven for pinning the same badge of shame here. It all looks very similar to *TJP* – same kind of interface, similar over-reliance of animations (although in a decidedly larger area of the screen) – but to say such things, would merely indicate that you had given the thing barely five minutes to win your affections before you switched over to something with guns and blood.

Buried In Time contains the kind of atmosphere that I haven't experienced in an adventure since the days of "go north", "get the sword" and "plant the plant in the plant pot and put the plant pot with the plant into the plant pot without the plant" (answers on a post-card if you can remember the game that came from). Too many of today's so-called adventure games are little more than linear tales with limited icon bars. *Buried In Time* uses its very fancy interface to simulate ye olde-worlde feel of yonder text-input games, while keeping the modern-day presentation that we've all come to know and spend money on.

All hail Presto?

I'm not sure if I'd go that far. I do have a worry over the game's length. (Do not be fooled by the three shiny CD's in the box – animations do not come cheap these days.) While the people from Hereford may be willing to settle for a game that can be completed within a week, I'm much less forgiving.



Enthralling atmosphere and challenging puzzles are one thing, but they need to be coupled with a game that sees you through the long, winter nights and slow, summer days.

If I can offer my two-penneth worth (I know I said I wouldn't but I lied), game designers who are in a rush to embrace the loving arms of the interactive movie, need to stop thinking like filmmakers to achieve their goals. *Buried In Time* has all the atmosphere and presentation that's needed for such a genre to work, but in keeping with movie-making tradition, they're trying to tell a story in 120 minutes or less.

Pacing for an IM (an acronym that I'll allow you to use at will) needs to be closer to that of a novel; something that allows the player to be drawn in slowly; allows them to experience the world that you're creating at his or her own rate. No one's doubting the technical ability is there, it's just time to start working on the other elements. Z

Tech specs

Note: Requires Windows 3.1
Memory: 8Mb
Processor: 486DX 33
Hard Disk Space: 10Mb
Graphics: SVGA (thousands of colours recommended)
Sound: SoundBlaster compatibles
Controls: Mouse, keyboard

Score

77

But for the length it might have gotten higher.

Price: £39.99 **Release Date:** Out now
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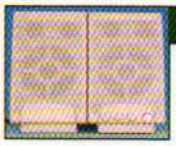
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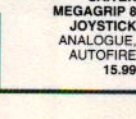
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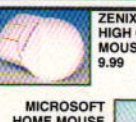


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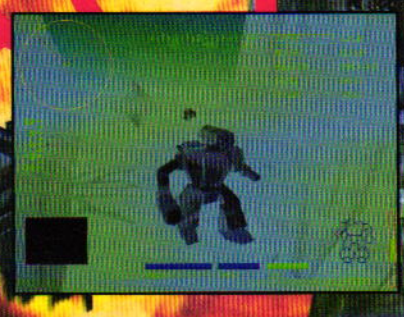
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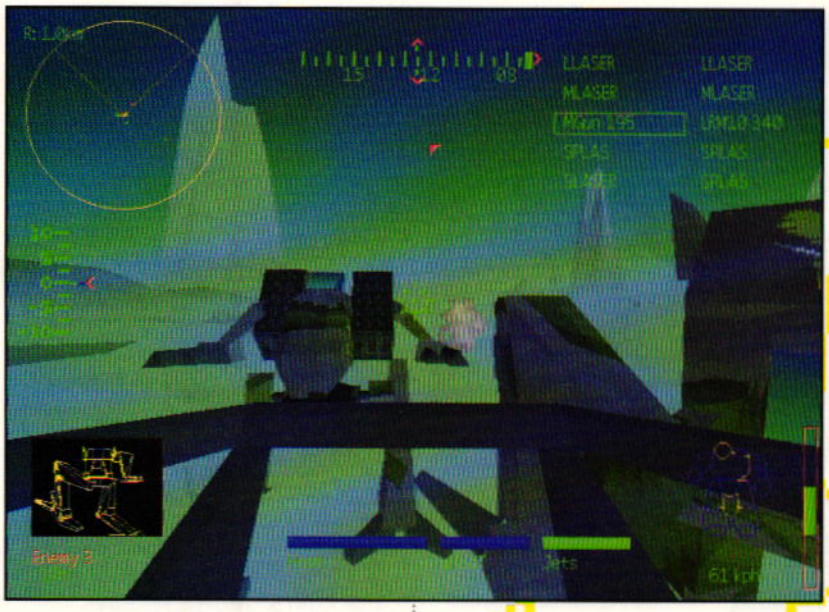
PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

There's something reassuring about clomping about the planet in a massive body, securely encased in a large protective layer. MechWarriors use armour plating; Patrick McCarthy uses subcutaneous fat.

MechWarrior 2









(Above) See what happens when you smoke in bed?

(Left) Look at those wintry graphics. It fair makes you shiver, doesn't it?

THE YEAR IS 3058. THE CLANS HAVE suffered a dishonourable defeat against the combined forces of the Inner Sphere during the battle of Tukayyid, and reluctantly agree to... oh, for God's sake, I can't go on with this bollocks. The Inner Sphere? The battle of Tukayyid? What the Sam Holy Hill is this, some kind of gosh-darned RPG or something?

Mungo not like words

Unfortunately, there's rather a lot of that sort of thing throughout this game. In fact, for an action game, there are far too many words with peculiarly-placed consonants and multiple Y's – in fact, there are more pages of eye-scuppering text than the average episode of *See Hear*.

This is what happens when you get a computer version of a board game. Games that are played on multi-coloured cardboard, by people wearing multi-coloured pullies and smiling with multi-coloured teeth, always come with mounds of event-specific charts and piles of weapons stat sheets so high that they'd dwarf the real-life Mechs they purport to control. While this is fine for people who enjoy sifting through the equivalent of the European stat-mountain. The kind of people who, after winning a little board-based battle, are eager to find out that the disheartened survivors of the onslaught have given up being Mech pilots to seek a career in alternative medicine – which is what you get in the computer game after every bloody scrap. But me not like um words. Me not care what happen to um survivors of um platoon me wipe out. Me not give um flying toss. That why me kill um in um first place.

The bare facts

All you really need to know is that there are two mobs of MechWarrior jocks, neither of whom have a particularly attractive name or logo. And they're each fighting the other lot to show that they're the best. There are two and a half ways to play: one-off missions, the campaign mode, or the (demo) network game. (The full version will be out in a future release, it says here.)

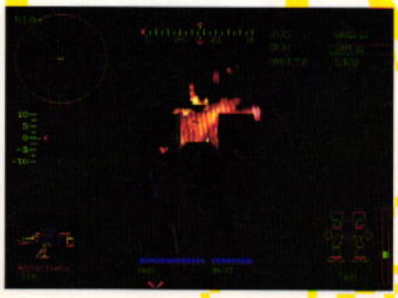
History is bunk

If you've seen any of the various games to date that involve the use of Giant Metal Walking Machines Of Death – GMWMODS (to get technical for a moment), you'll know the general idea. You clomp about in your GMWMOD, laughing maniacally and shouting in a scary, high-pitched voice about how big you are, firing missiles and mega-cannons at other GMWMODS, mowing down school children and stamping on chinchillas, until an opposing GMWMOD gets annoyed enough to blow your head off. Then you start all over again, secure in the knowledge that nobody knows about your private tendencies towards megalomania. If, like this one, they're done well, they're invariably popular, because they combine elements of tank games, flight sims and tactical war games, they can be played without appearing to be a specky propellor head, and as long as you don't take them too seriously, they're a laugh.

Gentlemen, choose your weapons

The difference between this and the only other halfway decent Mech-game, *Metaltech: Earthsiege*, is that you don't have to start the campaign mode with a poxy little mech that makes Robbie from *Lost In Space* look frighteningly hard. You're limited to a certain extent, in that you can only have a machine that weighs up to 60 tons, including all its weaponry, but that's something you can live with because you still get a decent machine out of it. No doubt they all vary slightly in their "special capabilities", but the one thing they have in common is the essential Hard Name: Hellbringer, Warhammer, Mad Dog, etc. Oh, for something different in the naming department of games like this. Where's the Mechaflorist? Or the Flan Bringer?





(Far left) Looks like their air quality is right up there with London's.

(Left) Ooh, scary, dark night-time missions.

Chain Firing

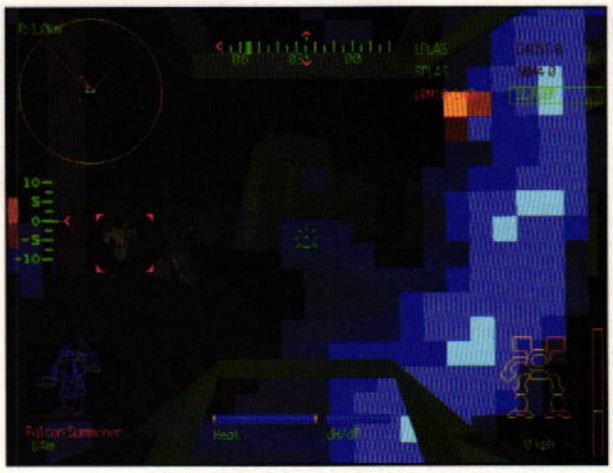
It's traditional in games like this to allow "chain firing", where you hold down the trigger and unleash a huge variety of death-dealing weaponry in one go. Unfortunately, there's also a tendency to have your weapon selector move on to the next weapon as soon as you stop firing, even when you're firing normally. This is a pain in the arse: you carefully select a laser cannon to shoot a Mech, or an ice-cream van or something, because you're saving your last missiles for a harder target down the road. Unfortunately, you pause slightly when firing, the selector moves on, and there go your irreplaceable missiles, just to shoot a poxy ice-cream van. Bad game. Bad game. Sit. Stay. No tea for you.



Hot Digital Dog

Having an enormous, armour-plated, walking tank that's crammed to the gills with sophisticated weaponry is all very well, but they do have a tendency to overheat just when things are getting a bit hairy. Basically, anything you do – run about, shoot weapons (particularly if you're chain shooting), crush motor cars beneath your oversized feet – heats you up. And when you get too hot, your ammo will explode, giving you a brand new set of bodily orifices which are bigger than your body itself. So your Mech goes into an automatic shutdown sequence until it cools. Which means sitting there, sweating, while an enemy Mech walks round you, deciding exactly where you most need a blast from a Gauss gun. Fortunately, you can override this manually and risk overheating for one more barrage – but don't come running to me when your arse flies out through the top of your head.







« Each Mech has a number of different basic setups with different permutations of weapons which, depending on your outlook and intelligence, is either endlessly fascinating, too time-consuming to worry about, or confusing. You can also start from scratch, take a basic Mech frame and build and save your own design. If you're a twat.

The Hills Have Size

Missions take place in a variety of locations, from inner city landscapes to desert wastes. And realistically, there are differing light and weather conditions which affect visibility and your Mech's performance. Desert missions make you more prone to overheating, and night can fall during a mission, or dawn break, or whatever.

The ground is still largely flat and uninspiring graphically, and the cities look more like a flat place with some very large boxes dotted about, but some of the locations have hills. Sometimes, and especially when using the external view, you remain unconvinced that the Mech is actually walking on the hill itself – they seem to hover above it – but at least they've tried, unlike in *Earthsiege*.

The Mechs clank about in a convincing manner, though, lurching from side to side with each step, and tilting as you move the turret independently of the main body. There are any number of ways to control the things, ranging from all-keyboard (this is easier than it sounds) to multiple joysticks, weapon control systems, and even rudder pedals.

There are a host of different views, including a satellite view (which doesn't zoom out far enough for my liking) and wire-frame and low-light visual aids. Most of the views can be zoomed in and out. There are also other aids available, such as target-locking, nearest target searching and an autopilot; unfortunately these aids are "dishonourable", and so you won't get as many bonus points for completing a mission if you use them. In fact, these people seem to place so much store by what's honourable and dishonourable, that you can't help wondering why they don't just get out of the machines and fight with swords, the ponces.





(Above) The mania for unnecessary verbiage is carried on throughout the game. You get a terminally uninteresting, developing storyline expounded to you at great length after every mission. And in the main game options screen there's an archive "Holoprojector", which has more anal retentive bollocks about the Clans, the people, and the machines than anyone could ever want to know. Alright, those who liked the original board game might sit through it. But they'll sit through anything. Just think, someone actually sits down and writes this stuff. Likewise, the manual and the game are both chocka with "facts" about the different Mechs, their weapons, their height, weight, armour ratings whether they prefer Muesli or a fry-up for breakfast and which stand-up comedian they voted for in last year's Perrier awards. Make a stand for humanity:don't read it. Just grab the biggest you're allowed and see what happens.

Tech specs

Memory: 8MB (7MB XMS)

Processor: 486DX2/66

Hard Disk Space: 30Mb

Graphics: 256 SVGA (640 x 480)

Sound: All major cards

Controls: keyboard, mouse, joystick, CH Flightstick & ProPedals, all Thrustmaster systems, Gravis and Suncom gamepads, Virtual I/O i-glasses, MS Sidewinder joystick

Note: Network demo requires Hayes-compatible modem (9600 BPS or faster), null-modem connection or IPX/Netbios network

Whinges

The battles progress quickly, to the point that you might have trouble keeping a bead on some of the faster-moving enemies. It's a shame in this respect that the turret can't rotate through 360° – eventually you have to turn the main body as well. And the Mechs don't crumple to the ground when you shoot their legs off, as they should do. Usually they carry on walking on one leg, which shows admirable determination and balance, but is still disconcerting. Another disappointment is the sound of some of the weapons – after all, where's the satisfaction in firing the mother of all cannons at someone if it sounds like a shrew with an upset stomach? Lastly, there's a tendency for some smaller objects to just pop up in front of you, rather than scaling properly. But these are minor niggles, and don't detract from the game too much. It's good, hard-hitting (soft-sounding) fun, with plenty of missions and a good difficulty curve. Z

Score

88

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PC ZONE10



You know how every so often a reader will post an embarrassingly bad poem in to the letters page of a magazine? Well Charlie Brooker's written something equally awful. Except he's getting paid for it.

PANTS

Blown Away

Blown Away's a brand new game, packed full of FMV,
It runs under Windows and it comes on a CD,
It revolves around a terrorist – a vicious parasite,
Who's holding your mates hostage strapped to sticks of dynamite.

*

It's based upon a movie which you probably don't know,
Since it flopped rather quickly and went straight-to-video,
It starred bold Jeff Bridges and Mr Jones (Tommy Lee)
The latter's a good actor and the former is a tree.

*

And if the film and game are soul mates then it comes as no surprise,
That barely a soul saw it, and those that did just closed their eyes,
For as an exercise in tedium the game is unsurpassed,
There's far more fun in drinking sick or chewing broken glass.

*

"What's it like?" you ask impatiently, heart pounding in your chest,
Well it's sort of reminiscent of the likes of 7th Guest,
On the surface it's damned pretty, lots of gloss and lots of sheen,
Underneath it's just a bunch of puzzles: dull in the extreme.
Let me give you an example that's as boring as it sounds:
The "action" starts in hospital with you just coming round,
Your first task is to leave the room (how the tension starts to gnaw...)
You have to crack a number puzzles to unlock the door.

*

It goes downhill from there my friends – there's nothing to admire,
Each and every puzzle is completely uninspired,
It's like a round of Countdown taking place on your PC,
But without the sexual tension wrought by Richard Whit-el-ey.

*

I just pray this marks the death knell of that most alarming trend,
The "Interactive Movie" (this one's endorsed by MGM),
The films they make in Hollywood are bland and trite enough,
So it's really not surprising that their games are just as duff.

*

If you love the puzzle section in the Sunday Magazines,
Then Blown Away might be enough to make you cream your jeans,
If, however, you are normal, it'll simply make you frown,
It may look nice but gameplay-wise it sucks like Divine Brown.

*

I'm sorry that I made you wade your way through all this shite,
If you think this poem's terrible, you're absolutely right.
I earnestly apologise for writing such weak verse,
But believe me when I tell you Blown Away is even worse.

Z

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb
Processor: 486/33
Hard Disk Space: 5Mb
Graphics: SVGA Windows
Sound: MPC Level 2 compatible sound card
Controls: Mouse, keyboard



(Above) A rainbow and a coloured track, Can't brighten up this load of cack.



(Bottom left) Isn't that Blanche off TV? She must be short of mon-ey.



(Bottom right) The heli's just gone up in flames, Wish this would happen to the game.

Score

19

There may have been a paper-thin sliver of gameplay here, but hey, it's just *Blown Away*

Price: £39.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Instant Access
Tel: 0171 372 7435

Blown Away Haiku

For those of you who don't know what Haiku is (or are), it's basically a Japanese style of poem containing very few syllables whose meaning is often greater than the sum of its parts. Sort of. Ahem. Anyway, here's a few haiku inspired by *Blown Away*:

my Blown Away squats
upon the dead corner shelf
ever friendless.

Blown Away precedes
Lovejoy on television.
we kill ourselves.

here an arse guffaws
hot wind through sphincter
getting Blown Away.

the footage rolls
cursors point and click again
time is dying now.

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Charlton Brooker was so excited when a big parcel popped through his letterbox: "Coo, it's for me! I hope it's not a pile of doggy doo again..."



PANTS

Cyberbykes

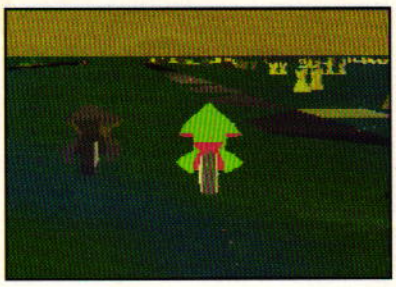
DEAR AUNT MARY,
Thank you very much for the copy of *Cyberbykes* you gave me for my birthday. It was very very kind of you. I like motorbikes a lot, and I like Virtual Reality even more, so you can imagine how excited I was when I opened the box and put it on the computer. A 3D motorcycle combat game! And a multi-player mode, too! What a good idea!

I have been playing the game for a few hours now, and I was wondering if you could answer a few questions for me. It shouldn't take very long and since you bought it I suppose you're the best person to ask.

Question 1: I think this game might have broken something in my PC. Most of my other games look really nice and have lots and lots of detail in them and are great. *Cyberbykes* looks funny. Are you really sure it's meant for the PC? It reminded me of the old games my brother used to play on his Atari ST when it had just come out. Do you think it has broken something forever? Perhaps all my games will look like this from now on. How much does it cost to fix the pictures on a PC?

Question 2: Can bikes fly in real life like they do in *Cyberbykes*? Every time I try to go at more than about two miles an hour, the smallest bump on the road launches me into the air like a rocket. In fact, I find it hard to stay on the ground for more than a few moments at a time. It wouldn't be so much of a problem, but it's hard to brake and turn the bike as well, and there's no reverse, so I find it really hard to actually go where I want to. Is not being able to go where you want to the point of this game? Please find out and let me know.

Question 3: What exactly is going on in the game anyway? Everything goes very jerkily whenever anything big appears, and then I get shot and I don't know why. And I'm sure the guns on my bike don't work properly because it's very hard to shoot things, too. Dad had a go and said that it was the worst thing he'd ever played, but I know that a lovely aunty like you wouldn't buy me anything bad.





(Above right) Enter the thrilling 3D world of *Cyberbykes*. So real it's unreal.

(Right) This is the highest detail setting. And boy oh boy, it looks real enough to touch, doesn't it?

Tech specs

Memory: 486FX 33
Processor: Intel Pentium Processor and modem for network play
Hard Disk Space: 15Mb 8Mb RAM
Graphics: VGA (SVGA promotion shots)
Sound: SoundBlaster and 100% compatibles
Controls: Mouse or keyboard

Question 4: My brother said we could try to squeeze some fun out of it on a network. Could you buy me four Pentiums for Christmas so I can play it?

Question 5: How are you supposed to use the course designing bit? Do you need a degree in spatial planning? I'm in the bottom class for maths, and we haven't started computer studies yet. Do you think Dr Stephen Hawking would know how to use it?

Well, that's about all my questions. If you could answer them as quickly as possible I'd be very very grateful, 'cos until I work out the answers I can't play the game 'cos it's horrid at the moment.

Once again, I'd like to say thank you very much for getting me *Cyberbykes* for my birthday. You malicious, spiteful, dunderheaded, old cow.

Yours Sincerely,
Charlie. Z

Score

10

***Cyberbykes*: It came, it saw, it sucked.**

Price: £24.99 **Release Date:** Out now
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"Noooooo!" screamed Paul Presley when we gave him the assignment. "I'll not go through that again. Xmas Lemmings was enough. Never again." We eventually had to lock him in an empty room and throw away the key.

3D Lemmings

I LIKE MY BRAIN. REALLY, I DO. IT SERVES me well on a day-to-day basis. It gets me through tricky conversations about nuclear thermodynamics at parties. It's what experts would consider to be a healthily adept brain in perfect working order. A little fuzzy in the short-term memory department, but otherwise Okay. So I could fully understand when it left me a little note on return from the *PC Zone* offices, saying how it was going on holiday for a few months and wouldn't be back until I promised to get rid of all evidence that *3D Lemmings* had ever been near my flat.

The last time I dipped one of my toes into the waters of *Lemming*-dom it was nearly bitten off by the hungry shark of addictiveness. *Lemmings* took over my life, my loves, my lunches and my laundry (it was that kind of game). Precious little work got done, deadlines passed me by like tourists escaping from Leamington Spa, and my life, basically, went to hell in a rather attractively-lined handbasket. Since then, we've had "More Lemmings", "Oh No, More Of More Lemmings", "My God, Even More Lemmings and If One More Bloody Lemming Shows Up". Finally, I went into therapy, came out a changed man, stayed clear of *Doom* and re-entered the community under the guiding hand of Virginia Bottomley. So I'm now fairly confident that I can approach the next wave of rodent ridicule without the need of a safety net.



(Above) Some of the levels are sponsored... ahem, inspired by Jelly Belly jelly beans.

(Below left) Sometimes you have to be cruel to be kind (there's a large trampoline at the bottom).

(Below right) Charles Bronslemming trains for his role in The Dirty Dozen.

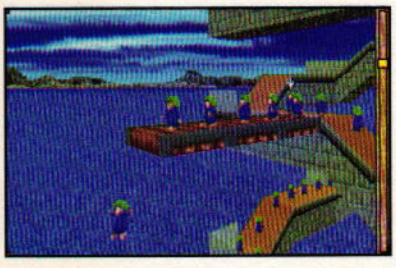
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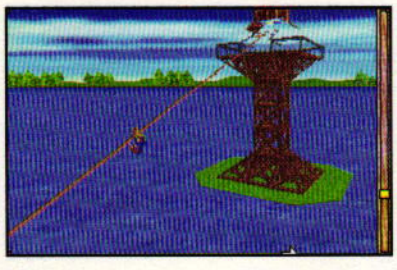
"They're back and they're in three dimensions!" reads the advertising copy I just made up. Yes, as if seeing the buggers explode, drown, plummet and so on from a side-on perspective wasn't enough, now we can enter their world in the full glory of three-dimensional polygonia. Essentially, this is a cross between everyone's favourite game-with-a-gun (*Doom*) and everyone's favourite game-with-a-nuke-button. You can even enter "Virtual Lemming" mode and see the wonders of the world through the eyes of the hapless creatures. This is more than just a gimmick though; several of the puzzles actually require this function in order to leave the state of "unsolved".

Hmm, that all reads a bit like "glossy, hype-inducing preview" copy rather than "opinionated, critical review" copy, so perhaps I'd better throw in a harsh comment or two to balance things out.

Where doesn't it work? For one thing, the cameras are a little tricky to control. Remember the old *Ultima Underworld*-style of movement? You know, the further you move the cursor from the centre of the screen, the faster you move around? Well it's like that, only the ratio between speed of movement and distance of cursor is immense. Move so much as a millimetre in any direction and your view shoots off faster than Linford Christie from an Olympic press meeting.

What else? The music's annoying? Naah, that's hardly a reason to boil it in Mazola, and anyway, it's kind of jolly, especially when combined with the "speech" of the lemmings. The graphics







Return of the Son of the Annotated Screenshot™

Just when you thought it was safe to go back in the review section, we proudly present the long-awaited return of the ever-popular space filler – ladies and gentlemen, I give you the annotated screenshot (*applause*).

From left to right

Arrow: Lemming select. Used to inject paranoia and fear into an unsuspecting lemming.
Face: Virtual lemming. Used to view the world through green-tinted spectacles.
Blocker: Used to enforce Draconian censorship on the lemming population.
Turner: Used to force lemmings to walk where YOU want them to. Free will? Pah!
Bomber: Used to scare baby lemmings into going to bed (nee: "Go to sleep little Lemy or you'll be blown up by God!")
Builder: Used to elevate lemmings to a higher state of mind through conventional means.
Basher: Used to make pitiful attempts at escape. Ze var ist over for you Johnny lemming!
Miner: Used to burrow at a right angle to reality. All tunnels lead to oblivion.
Digger: Used to dig in a vertical manner. Er, all tunnels lead to oblivion (still).
Climber: Used to, um, climb.
Floater: Used to float down.
(*That's enough icons. Ed.*)

Map: The overhead map provides an overall look at the current level. It isn't as detailed as it could be and can be turned off if it obscures the view (as can all of the icon bars).



From top to bottom

In: Shows how many lemmings are still needed to complete the level. Once this reaches zero, you can nuke the rest.
Out: Shows how many levels are currently outside and causing trouble.
Clock: Shows the amount of time left before the end of the world as the lemmings know it (© Michael Stipe 1991).
Bomb: The ever-faithful nuke button. Ahh, good little nuke button. You'll never let me down. Mmmm...
Arrow: Used to speed up time and reduce the interminable wait for rodent genocide.
Camera: Used to switch between the quartet of Orwellian surveillance devices available.
Paws: Used to temporarily suspend the lemming population in time and make their fingernails grow (ummm?).
Circular arrows: Used to enable the ER-operating room view mode.
Plus/Minus Nos.: Used to regulate the flow of lemmings into your nightmares.
Sliding scale: Used to elevate and lower your own view of the universe.

are blocky? Again, not really. The 3D works quite well and has allowed the designers to come up with some clever puzzles, involving depth as well as height and length. The commands? Possibly, I mean, we've only got the original *Lemmings* to play with (blockers, diggers, floaters – always a bugger to flush – etc), although a new one, known as a turner, has appeared, but this is only natural for a game that uses 3D movement. So I guess I can't fault that either, Psyggy has even put in a handy way of selecting the lemmings – pick one ahead of time, then you just click on the action as soon as you want the lemming to change.

Basically, it's hard to be critical of *3D Lemmings* since, from a gameplay point of view, it contains little more than the original did and the original was, is and ever shall be, good, addictive fun. The trouble is, we've already been there and this is just more of the same but viewed from a different angle. It's good, it's even challenging. It's *Lemmings*.







(Left) Each level comes with a rotating preview to let you adopt and improve your strategies ahead of time.

(Far left) This is the lemmings new 3D home. Get them here and you can kill them again on another level.

Tech specs

Memory: 4Mb
Processor: 486DX
Hard Disk Space: 12Mb
Graphics: VGA/SVGA
Sound: All major sound cards
Controls: Mouse, keyboard

But you're not hooked again?

It's just that... well, am I the only one who's just a little bit boring of the damn things now? I mean, I've been playing with them since '89 and frankly, it's about time we moved on. You can keep updating the dratted things as much as you like but it's still *Lemmings* when you cut through all the gloss. Perhaps we should send a message to Psygnosis saying that this particular cow has been milked so much it's passing yoghurt and it's about time we had something else. Then again, maybe we should just wait until the next one and have one last bash with this lot. (*That's it, I'm off for good. Paul's Brain.*) **Z**

Score

71

We've seen it all before, just from a different angle.

Price: £39.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Psygnosis **Tel:** 0151 282 3000

Player Manager 2

It's the follow up to *Player Manager*, and what better name could it be given? We gave it to Patrick McCarthy, and who better could it be given to. (*Where shall I start? Ed.*)

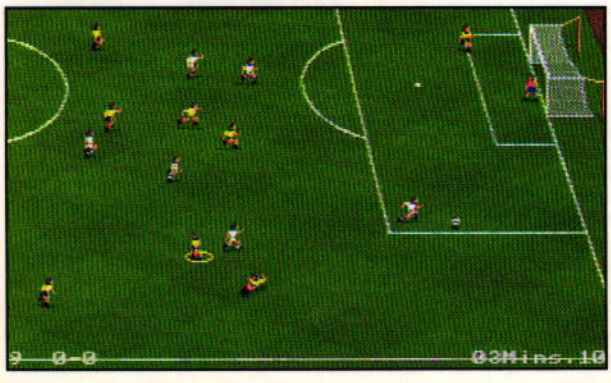
LIFE FOR THE AVERAGE FOOTBALL FAN is one of unremitting disappointment. There are only so many championships and cups to be won, meaning there are a lot more pissed off football fans than happy ones each season. Alright, so life may be made bearable a couple of times a season by a thumping win against your hated local rivals. But generally, you spend most of your life wondering why you bother turning up every week. Then every summer there's a bout of insane optimism (brought on by too much sun) that leads to the certainty that This Will Be Our Year – a feeling usually long gone either by about September 10th. Or straight after they blow four million quid on bloody Chris Armstrong and sell Nick Barmby.

Lie down on this couch

This is where football management games have a role to play in society – they are there to provide essential psychiatric help to the bitter and twisted follower of the crap football teams of this world. A good game gives you the chance to prove that, if only you were given your chance by the Care In The Community cases who run your club, you could have them challenging for European and World Club honours within the hour. And we've said this over and over (and over) again, but if a game doesn't allow you to choose your own team, much of whatever appeal it might have is already diminished.

(Below) Catch those standard-setting match graphics, Daddy-o

(Right) Formation editors, yet. I'm solid gone, Uncle.



Tech specs

Memory: 4MB RAM
Processor: 486/DX2
Hard Disk Space: 1Mb
Graphics: SVGA
Sound: SoundBlaster or 100% compatibles
Controls: Joystick, mouse

Player Manager 2 does not allow you to choose your own club. Depending on how many of you are playing the game (up to four), the clubs that you'll be allocated will be local rivals from the "2nd division" – their up-to-the-minute term for the Endsleigh League 1st Division. If there's two, you might get Wolves and Birmingham City, for example. Hold me back, you cry as one.

The great leveller

The second main problem with it is common to any management game that includes an arcade section: if you're crap at the arcade bit, even possessing the finest tactical mind and most wonderful team won't enable you to win. But if you're brilliant at the arcade bit, you can win things with really crap teams – which makes a mockery of the management sections of the game. *Sensible World of Soccer* strikes a balance between the two by restricting the management side of things to buying and selling players and inventing wacky formations. And when it gets to the PC in 2021, you will be able to decide for yourself whether even this works or not.





Unlike *Sensi*, *Player Manager 2* doesn't even have the arcade bit to help it out – that's cack, too. It's visually stunted; hard to time shots; difficult to control the ball; and corner kicks, free kicks and so on are computer-controlled. (Arh!) And while the day-to-day management options cover everything from ground improvements to signing up schoolboys, the match options are restricted to changing formations and substituting, meaning there's little satisfaction when playing it purely as a management game (something you have to do every three seasons after the age of 36 anyway). One to avoid. **Z**

Score

45

Another top notch football game for the PC

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Tony Split

He's a tightfisted git.

More low-budget nonsense from the man who's even tighter than a spandex Gladiator's suit. This month's assistance is provided by Paul Presley.

A REAL TELEPHONE CONVERSATION:
Me: Hello?
Chris Anderson (for it is he): Hello, Paul? Can you do me a favour?
Me: Hi Chris. Whassup homie?
Chris: Er, yes. I've got to go to Seattle for a few days...
Me: Attending the Nirvana Memorial Anniversary, eh?
Chris: Yes, I'm appearing in the stage play. Can you take care of a friend of mine for a few days? Just till I get back?
Me: Sure thing bro'. Just slap me with the data and I'll see to the task with the utmost of speed.
Chris: Thanks. I've already sent him round. Oh, and can you do the budget games round-up for me, too?
Me: Surely my most Anderson of friends. Thy will be done.
Chris: They're all from Virgin's White Label so they should be good.
(There is a knock at the door.)
Me: That'll be him now. Go catch the airborne device, man.
Chris: Uh, yeah. Bye.
(I open the door.)
Tony Split: *(Sniffs loudly.)* All right? Borrow me ten quid?
Me: You bastard, Chris!

IndyCar Racing

Remember when our Nige' went over to America and promptly proved that Britain Is Best™ by trouncing the Yanks in his rookie year (hurrah!)? Well, remember how when Michael Andretti came over here... he had to go home half way through his Formula One season because he was crying or something like that? Well that's almost like the struggle *IndyCar Racing* had with MicroProse's excellent *F1GP*.

IndyCar's nice and all that, and has the kind of graphics that make an advertising executive wet his pants with excitement, but it suffers from a case of "circulartrackyawnitus". As a budget racing game, you couldn't really ask for anything more. This is one of the definitive games of the genre, and even if *F1GP2* is about to come out this is still a bloody good game. For a tenner you really couldn't do much better.

SCORE OOOOO
PRICE £9.99

Conspiracy

Starring Donald Sutherland, no less! "Big-Time Hollywood Actor Hits Small-Time Computer Game Shock" read the tabloid headlines (or they might have done) when Virgin announced this decidedly average espionage thriller. The problem was that most of us had seen it before under the title *KGB*, and the inclusion of Keifer's dad did little more than allow us to make all sorts of *Dirty Dozen* jokes in the reviews.

These days it's paling faster than a Brit returning from Benidorm when compared to such heavyweights as *Full Throttle* and *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. Cryo has even managed to surpass itself with superior titles like *Dragon Lore* and *Lost Eden* (which despite whatever anyone says, *I* liked). *Conspiracy* may be cheap, but it ain't cheerful.

SCORE OO
PRICE £9.99

Hand of Fate

Feminism ahoy, as Keith Floyd is often heard to cry. *Hand of Fate* was kind of unique at the time in having a female lead. Well that might have been all very bold and daring back in the sexually repressed days of '94, but these are the enlightened '95s and that kind of thing is little more than an extension of the Sandy Bullock/Geena Davis/Julia Roberts Women For Equal Rights movement that infects our everyday lives... *(Where exactly are you going with all this? Ed.)* Nowhere, really. Erm, sorry. Just filling space... Ahem...

So, *Hand of Fate* – pretty adventure, fairy-tale-style story, a bit twee in places, and annoying voice-overs. Just take all the *King's Quest* nonsense, wrap it up in a 90s-style interface and Bob's your uncle's personal masseuse. Nothing special and no amount of budgetary pricing points are going to change that.

SCORE OOO
PRICE £14.99

INDYCAR RACING OOOOO

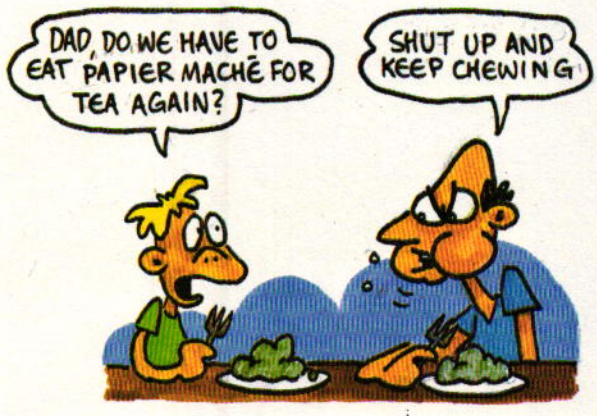


CONSPIRACY OOO



HAND OF FATE OOO





Lands of Lore

Whatever happened to first-person perspective adventures? I don't mean any of that *Doom* rubbish *(Gasp! Burn the heretic! Ed., Dep. Ed., Art Ed., Macca, the cleaners etc.)*, I mean things like *Ultima Underworld* and *System Shock*. They were all the rage at one point, then they just sort of stopped. We had *Dungeon Master II* last month, but being merely flick-screen it didn't hold up too well. *Lands of Lore* was the last, best hope for flick-screeners and it's still not too bad today, but we'd definitely like to see more of the smooth-scrollers.

Despite a Patrick Stewart voice-over *(All hail the King. A Trekker.)*, *Lands of Lore* doesn't really manage to capture the imagination anymore. It plays well enough, and at this price it's probably worthwhile if you've nothing better to spend your cash on (like food, rent or heating), but it still manages to feel like a step backwards rather than a nostalgic trip in the Bus of Life down the Lane of Memory, stopping at the Depot of Eternity.

SCORE OOO
PRICE £14.99

The 7th Guest

Pre-rendered animation clips. If you want to point the finger at any one product, then point it here.

The 7th Guest started the whole multi-CD-ROM-packed-with-animation-clips-at-the-expense-of-gameplay trend, a trend that has been healthily maintained with just about every American product to surface since. By today's standards, it's actually pretty tame stuff – flimsy video clips and fairly jerky movement – and the gameplay is still just as poor as ever. Parlour games and children's puzzles are scarcely adequate fare in this day and age. Worries are that the forthcoming sequel offers much the same, but more on that as we get it.

SCORE OO
PRICE £9.99

LANDS OF LORE OOO



Rebel Assault

Okay, time to stick my neck out again. I like *Rebel Assault*. I always have and I always will. Okay, it is linear, and all right, it is a one-shot experience, but I like it and since I'm writing this that's all that counts. *(That's what you think. Ed.)*

It's still pretty thrilling to play through your very own *Star Wars* film,



REBEL ASSAULT OOOO

and it still holds together with the kind of polish that can only be bought from the poshest of posh stores. LucasArts certainly knows how to put together quality software and this is just another high point in the whole oeuvre.

SCORE OOOO
PRICE TBA

Also Available

X-Wing – £tba
Seminal space-flight-sim type of game. A "must have" at any price.

Dawn Patrol – £14.99
One for the history buffs only, even if the flight sim bits are okay.

Star Trek: 25th Anniversary – £12.99
Not a patch on the recent *TNG* adventure, but it's still a pretty good teaser in its own right.

Day Of The Tentacle – £12.99
LucasArts finery, starring the voice of Les from WKRP in Cincinatti. (Who he?)

Dreamweb – £12.99
Middling sci-fi RPG with an infamous shagging scene. Other than that bit, nothing special.

Cannon Fodder 2 – £9.99
Gratuitous violence meets first-rate gameplay. Great stuff.

Okay, over to Tony for his verdict. Slap us with the best buys, Tony mate...

Tony: None of them.

Me: No, hang on Tone, old fella me lad. You must like some of them. They are... cheap.

Tony: £15? Cheap? I'll give you £2.50 for the lot.

Me: No, I'm not selling them, Tony.

Tony: I can have them for nothing, then? Very kind of you guv'nor.

Me: You're not following me Ol' Splitster. Go on, I just want you to recommend your favourites.

Tony: Am I being paid for this?

Me: Forget it. And get your hand out of my wallet, you tight git. Z





Windows 95 as a Games

Why is *Windows 3* so crap? Why is DOS so annoying? Dave Mathieson explains how *Windows 95* will deliver you from evil.

Platform

IF COMPUTERS ALL WENT TO SCHOOL, an end-of-year report card for the PC might read something like this:-

Autumn Term: Started off well in Maths and English, but showed a distinct lack of ability on the playing field. Had to be sent home in floods of tears after being teased by the others.

Spring Term: Once again, top of the class in the more academic pursuits, but lacks an appreciation of the arts. Has started playing rugger for the second team.

Summer Term: Should be playing cricket for the county, but an insistence on reading out-dated Maths textbooks has severely hampered sporting prowess.

Casting this smartarse metaphor aside, the deal is that PC's have the potential to be the best home-games platforms around, but they're hampered in this respect in two ways. Firstly, they still run DOS, which was designed for PC's that were a bit posh 15 years ago (ie crap by today's standards). Secondly, most people want to run things like word-processors and spreadsheets, which work best under *Windows*. Consequently, the modern PC-owning spreadsheeter/gamer has to be a bit schizophrenic in order to get to grips with their PC.

Games run best under DOS because their programmers are a bunch of hippies who refuse to be tied down by the rigid framework that *Windows* imposes on them, dude. Actually, this last statement is totally untrue, and even if it was true, we couldn't print it 'cos we'd never get our hands on any review copies again... The real reason is that most games need speed, and the best way to get this is to write programs that use the hardware at the lowest level. While this approach is very time-consuming, the fact that it involves talking the same language as the PC provides the impressive frame rates that we all lust after.

When it comes to *Windows* programs, the criteria is a bit different. While speed is important, the main benefits of using *Windows* are the interface and the consistency that this provides between different applications (just about every *Windows* program has a "File" menu where you open and save documents, for example). This is all very nice, but who really wants all games to look the same anyway?

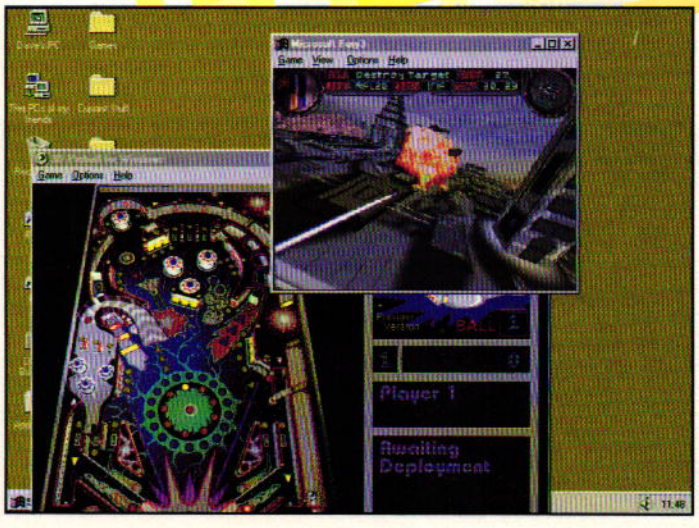
There are three other advantages that *Windows* offers, however, that have the potential to make games a lot easier to both play and to develop:-

1 When you add new hardware to your system – such as a graphics or sound card – under *Windows*, you install the driver, and that's it. You don't have to tell each new program that you install exactly what hardware you've got, as the driver takes care of this.

2 *Windows* programmers don't have to worry as much about the low-level techniques needed when writing games. This is because *Windows* provides a standard set of functions that control many of the ways that programs behave (called the API). Using the API means that programmers can get on with the business in hand, as they don't have to "re-invent the wheel" each time they write a new program. A subset of the API, called the GDI (don't worry about all these acronyms – knowing what they stand for won't make you any sexier) is used to handle graphics and it contains all of the routines needed to make things like windows and dialogue boxes work properly. The problem with the API is that it isn't designed with games in mind, which is why all those shareware *Windows* shoot 'em ups are so crap. »



(Above) Ooh look, a word-processor! Jolly handy for writing poetry while killing alien drone ships.



(Left) This bit of "two games at once" action demonstrates *Windows 95*'s multi-tasking abilities, which enables four-handed, twin-headed beings to play, erm. . . two games at once.



3 When was the last time you heard a bunch of accountants complaining that they couldn't get their spreadsheets working because they didn't have enough conventional memory? *Windows* has much better memory management than DOS. As mentioned earlier, DOS is old, and for reasons of compatibility, it hasn't fundamentally changed since PC's were powered by 8088 and 8086 CPU's. These were only capable of handling up to one megabyte of memory, and as 384K of this was required for various system functions, programs had only 640K to play with. Although this was considered plenty at the time, most PC's these days are fitted with at least 4MB of RAM, and there's plenty of software out there that loves all this memory. In order to get round this, a couple of different standards have been set up – EMS (Expanded Memory) and XMS (Extended Memory). These are basically very clever botch jobs which enable DOS programs to have access to the extra memory fitted to your PC. Anyone who plays games will know that you can waste a large part of your life juggling the various types of memory in an attempt to get some poxy game up and running. But because *Windows* effectively ignores DOS's memory management, using it bypasses these hassles.

More than a pretty interface

Okay, you already knew that *Windows* is rubbish for games, and that DOS can be a pain in the arse, and now you know why. Of course, Bill Gates wouldn't be one of the richest men in the world if he didn't have a few cards up his very expensive sleeves, and Microsoft has finally realised that it can make even more lolly if it can make games run under its latest attempt at world domination, *Windows 95*.

Windows 95 is a lot more than just a groovy new user interface. It's a fully-fledged 32-bit, multi-threaded operating system with bells on. What this means to you, the gamer, is that it's capable of a lot more than just running a few applications. While *Windows 3.x* had far better memory management than DOS, it was hampered by the fact that it still needed it running underneath. *Windows 95* ignores DOS altogether; and it uses 32-bit code throughout instead of the 16-bits used by earlier versions. This imposed limitations on the way that multiple processes could be managed, one result of this being the relatively high frequency of crashes caused by a naughty program doing something it shouldn't. *Windows 95* is much more robust, however, and errant programs are usually terminated without bringing the whole system down.

You probably already know that you can run DOS games under *Windows 95*. While *Windows 3.x* provides DOS prompts and a thing called a PIF editor to help run DOS programs, when it came to games, the whole thing becomes totally unstuck because of all the low-level gubbins. However, DOS sessions under *Windows 95* do a much better job of convincing programs that they're running under "proper" DOS, and most games can be set-up and run by double-clicking an icon. If you have enough memory, you can even get two games running at once and switch between them. (Christ knows why you'd want to do this, but it certainly draws admiring gasps from the ladies. Erm. Maybe not.)

Running DOS games in this way isn't perfect, however, as there is a bit of a performance hit. Worse still, some games can't be persuaded to run at all



Fury3

To show off the gaming potential of *Windows 95*, Microsoft is planning to start releasing "proper" games, the first of which will be *Fury3* – a 3D blast 'em up which is essentially the same as *Terminal Velocity*, reviewed last month.

In choosing a game like this, no-one can accuse Microsoft of going for the easy option as *Fury3* has all the features associated with "posh" games, including full 3D motion, big digitised explosions, and smoothly undulating texture-mapped terrain. The copy I tried out seemed on a par with *Terminal Velocity* when it came to frame-rate, although the texture-mapping seems a lot smoother, with less of the close-up "blockiness" associated with graphics of this type. What's more, *Fury3* runs in a fully re-sizeable window, and, call me sad, but I was very impressed by the way in which you could move the window around the screen while the intro sequence was playing, and it carries on the whole time. (Okay, I'll shut up.)

The sound effects throughout are also excellent, and as they are played back using the generic *Windows* driver for your sound card, you don't have to worry about IRQ and DMA settings. A similar setup is used for the joystick, which can be calibrated at any time using the settings in the Control Panel, even when the game isn't running.

Fury3 is a great demonstration of the viability of *Windows 95* as a games platform, and it sets a challenge to other developers, which means that we should all benefit.





(Above) What happened to Furies 1 & 2?

(Right) As this external view shows, the best way to avoid mountains is to fly up.

(Far right) In full-screen mode, *Fury3* truly rocks, especially when you start blowing things up.

in this mode, and you have to run them in "DOS mode", which is exactly the same as running them under DOS in the "good old days", with the memory hassles we all know and love (*Windows 95* still retains CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT for DOS-sy purposes). It's worth using this mode anyway for CPU-taxing games, such as *US Navy Fighters* and *Wing Commander 3*.

In any event, this ability to run DOS games is only really a stop-gap; it doesn't mark a dramatic departure from the system that we've all had to put up with for so long. The thing is, those clever so-and-sos at Microsoft have decided that it's a good idea to design *Windows 95* in such a way that games developers have enough control over the system to be able to get decent performance, while still having to follow rules that make their programs play nicely with the rest of the system. This means (in theory, at least) that all the benefits of *Windows* – such as decent memory management, multi-tasking and universal drivers for hardware – can be used to provide a total gaming environment that should have the competition crapping themselves.

...Teach the World to WinG

In order to persuade programmers to write *Windows 95* games, Microsoft has released a thingy known as WinG (pronounced Win-Gee, or whingy, depending on your outlook) that gives it the power it needs. Remember the API/GDI stuff mentioned earlier? Well WinG is basically an extension to these, and the tools it provides mean that programs have much better access to the hardware.

While WinG does work with *Windows 3.x*, under *Windows 95* it provides better support for things like higher colour depths and texture mapping.

In a "putting it's money where it's mouth is" type move, Microsoft has lined up a series of releases (due to be launched in the near future), which are designed to show the world what its new system is capable of, as well as including a couple with *Windows 95* itself (see boxout below). The first commercially available game will be *Fury*^{3}, which is basically the same as *Terminal Velocity* (see boxout, below left).

Of course, the world would be a very dull place if all games were produced by one company, and so you can expect *Windows 95* releases from many major developers by the end of the year. These will include Mindscape, which'll be releasing a sports-sim, *NCAA Football*, as well as *VMAX*, a futuristic racing/shoot 'em up effort. Other companies that have signed up include Activision and Sierra. And, while others are being a bit tight-lipped (given that it takes months, or longer, to develop a game), it's more than likely that they've got products in the pipeline, too.

What this all adds up to is a major revolution in the way that we'll all be playing games in the year ahead.

It's pretty certain that *Windows 95* will sell like Rizlas at Glastonbury, and in no more than a couple of years we'll all have forgotten what DOS even stood for, leaving a few sad tecchies muttering things like, "I used to be someone. I could go round my mates' houses and sort out their system files and have all the tea I could drink. And then they'd be my friends."

While Microsoft's slogan "The world will never be the same" may sound a bit corny, if you spend as much time playing games as some people round here, it could be truer than you think. **Z**

(Below) It's *Doom* in a hovercraft without any weapons. Groovy, huh?

(Far below) If you like playing pinball in pubs, you'll probably like playing *Pinball* in *Windows*.

Games that come with Windows 95

Guess what the two most-played PC games in the world are? *Minesweeper* and *Solitaire*. Due to their innovative use of graphics, sound and gameplay, they've managed to capture the world by storm and enthrall players everywhere. Oh, all right – it's because they come free with *Windows 3.x*.

The good news for stingy people who only play free games is that, as well as the two faves mentioned above, *Windows 95* comes with a couple of new games that are a lot more impressive than these earlier efforts. The first of these, *Hover*, is a slightly silly 3D game, where you zip around in a hovercraft picking up flags. While, admittedly, the gameplay is slightly suspect, it uses a *Doom*-style graphics engine to good effect, and it shows what's possible under *Windows 95*.

The second game isn't exactly free as it comes with the *Windows 95 Plus!* pack, which contains lots of enhancements to the basic system. *3D Pinball* is a game based on everyone's favourite retro arcade game which comes with two tables. The "3D" in the title is a bit of a con, and as far as I can make out, all this means is that the table is tilted back a bit so that the top of it appears a bit further away. Still, it's better than *Solitaire*.



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(Far left) Drag your players about to your heart's content in the tactics screen.

(Left) Yet another heroic display by our brave, brave boys.

PC ZONE CLASSIC

Championship Manager 2

Patrick McCarthy has long since given up trying to be entertaining – or even remotely interesting – when it comes to football games. Get ready for a long slog.

IF THOU BE'ST ONE OF THOSE LUCKY people who hath never played *Championship Manager* unto yet, get out now, while you still can. Grabbest thou some garlic (if thou hast no garlic to hand, then an onion, a leek or any other member of the allium family will do), place it on a strongly knotted cord about thy neck, run thee many miles from this place and hide thy boney-assed body somewhere dark and poorly-appointed, and don't come out until the rest of the world hath gone strangely quiet. For thine own sake and the sake of those around thee, flee! Flee, I say! Flee like the wind that doth whistle down the inside of a top professional sprint hurdler's shorts... For many are they who have fallen foul of their belief that they couldst handle the evil addiction that was *Championship Manager 95*. Yea, many are they, and broken of soul, and withered of mouse hand and baggy of eye. For *Championship Manager 95* was verily addictive, unto like a very addictive thing – about four boxes of Cheesums and a kilo of crack, in fact. And if thou hast already fallen foul of the evil, feelest thou not that thou art safe, cocky one. For there art now a new... *(Is there going to be much more of this? Ed.)* Nearly finished. For there art now a new example of the life-sucking terror, and it goeth by the name *Championship Manager 2* and it be'st even worse. There. *(Thank you. You're only supposed to do that with adventure games, you know. Ed.)*

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb

Processor: 486 SX

Hard Disk Space: 6Mb (plus 20Mb per game)

Graphics: SVGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Mouse

Densely populated gaming area alert

Yes, *Championship Manager 2* is with us, and it's been improved beyond the wildest imaginings of its most ardent (read: saddest, most friendless, most obsessive) fan. And when we talk about sad, obsessive, friendless fans, we know what we're talking about: there are certain frequenters of this office, who for the sake of their reputation will remain anonymous, who have played games up until the year 2025 in *Championship Manager 95* (*CM95*). That's 30 years. (And they still haven't won the European Cup.) In their game, today's players' children have burst forth onto the scene, played out their triumphs, »





(Far left) You get used to this after a while.

(Left) Eat your heart out, Venables!

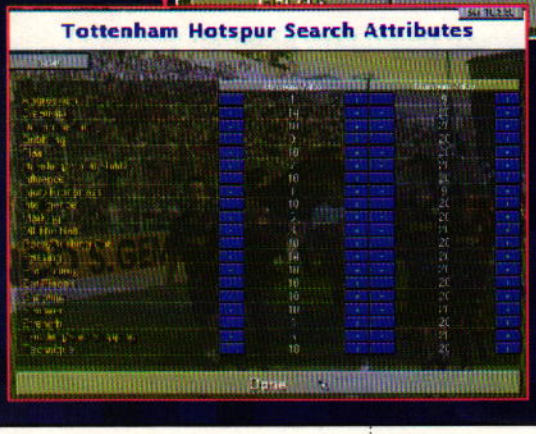
Shop Till You Drop

Approximately three minutes after choosing your team – and remember, unlike lesser games, you can choose any team that takes your fancy – you're going to want to buy some players to enhance the shite you start with. So no more messing about – off to the Player Search screen with you.

From left to right
- Search for players by transfer status: listed, listed for loan, free transfers, out of contract, or their contract ends within three months
- By position: goal-keepers, defenders, midfielders, forwards, and strikers
- Right-sided, left-sided, central or anywhere
- By age: 15-19 years, 15-24, 20-29, 25-29, 30+
- By value: 0-5 million, 0-2M, 0-1M, 0-500K, 0-250K, 0-100K, 0-50K, 0-25K or any value



From left to right
- By where they play or where they're from: domestic based, foreign based but interested in coming to England, foreign based but intelligent, foreign-based home players, players based anywhere, or just English (for those, like Hitler, with designs on Europe)
- Include or exclude those who are unavailable at any price
- Include or exclude those who are injured
- Sort players searched for by value, by average rating, by goals, by assists, or by national caps
- General player search, or search by player name, first letter of name, first few letters, or whatever



- Skills: You can use this to summon another complete set of parameters, used to further qualify your search for a player according to skills in every category in the game. There are no less than 20 of them: aggression, creativity, determination, dribbling, flair, heading/aerial ability, influence, injury prone-ness, intelligence, marking, off the ball, pace/pushing out, passing, positioning, set pieces, shooting, stamina, strength, tackling/shot-stopping, and technique. You can set the minimum and maximum rating you require in every area (you might like to set low maximums for aggression and injury prone-ness, for example). Or, on the other hand, you might not give a fuck.

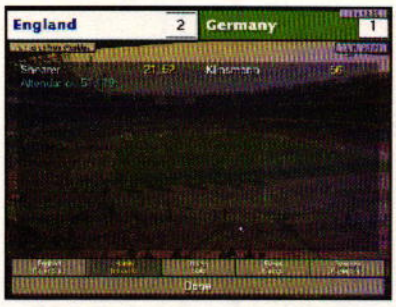
« been arrested outside nightclubs for beating up hovertaxi drivers, and hung up their boots, for God's sake.

When we say "improved", we *mean* "improved". It's difficult to know where to start, but let's try bludgeoning you with heavy-duty facts. First, there's the sheer number of players you can search through to find that perfect addition to your squad. We're talking about every player in every major football team in Europe, and many of the top club sides from around the world (Velez Sarsfield, etc). Real players, with the correct names in real teams, each with ratings in 20 different categories.

If you know exactly who you want for your team (Marcel Desailly for Gillingham), you can just type in their name and the search facility will find them, wherever they've been transferred to since the game began. But if you only know the type of player you want, the parameters that you can enter to search for him with are more extensive than a bison's doink. There's a special little panel around here somewhere just to tell you all about it – the search parameters, not the doink. Treasure it, it took the poor designer ages.

Interfaces

What's always been so appealing about *CM95* is the interface, and *Championship Manager 2* (*CM2*) matches it: wherever you are in the game, however deeply you're down a pathway of screens, looking at God knows what obscure and sordid statistic, you can still do everything there to a player that you can do if you access their information through the team screen. But to put it more specifically – you might be having a bit of a nosy through the results of that week's games. You see a result in the international games that interests you and you want to look at the full match report. From there, you look at the individual player stats for the game. These tell you that one of the players has performed impressively, and naturally you want to know more. But you don't have to go all the way up through the menus to the main Results screen, then back down through the Player Search or Team screens – just click on his name and look at his details from where you are. And if you like the look of him, you can shortlist him there and then, or even put in a bid to buy him (as long as the transfer deadlines for his country haven't expired, of course). *Eccelente, ambassadore.* No other





(Far left) See that victory over Germany? I managed that.

(Left) And that.

(Right) Judging by these results, it looks like Wales have improved somewhat.

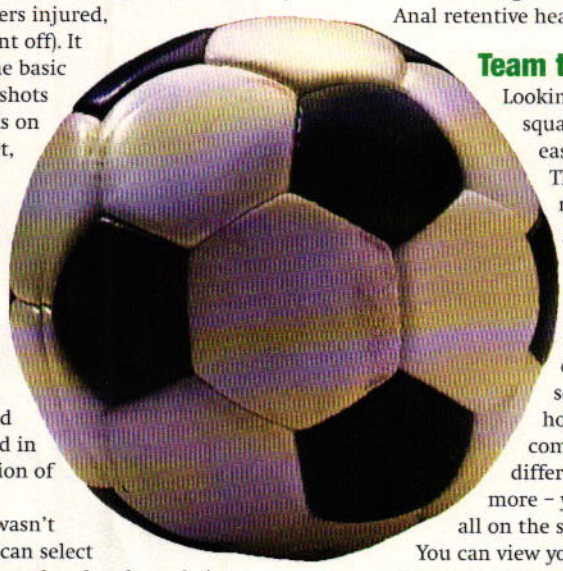


game does this for you; in fact, some business spreadsheets don't handle this amount of information so conveniently.

And what about the results and stats service? *Every single match* played in this game generates stats in this way. Every game played can show you the player's performance stats out of ten, any match incidents that occur (the goalscorers, and any players injured, booked or sent off). It shows you the basic match stats (shots on goal, shots on and off target, number of corners and freekicks for each side), plus the old familiar percentage ratings for defence, mid0field and attack as used in the first version of the game.

As if that wasn't enough, you can select either side that played and see their individual match stats. This is amazing the first time you see it: it shows passes attempted and completed, key passes completed, tackles attempted and won, key tackles won, headers challenged for and won, key headers won, shots taken, shots on goal, goals scored and an overall fitness rating (pant pant). For every game played. So if one of your players is called up for international duty and goes off to play for Bielorussia midweek, you can look it all up and see how he and his team played; and you can pick any player or team in the game and do the same thing, at any time.

Anal retentive heaven.



Team talk

Looking at your squad screen is easier, too. There's no more jumping backwards and forwards between different screens to see how players are compared in different areas any more – you can do it all on the same screen.

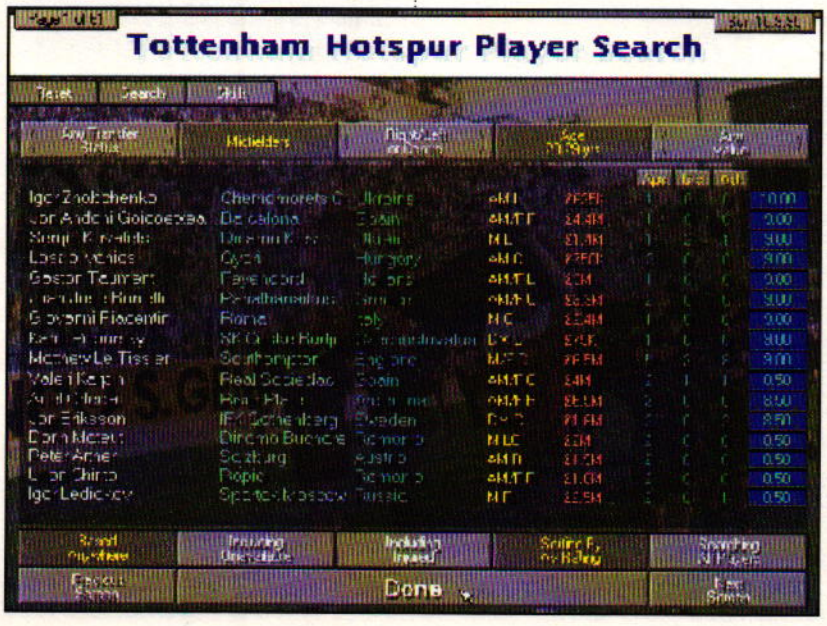
You can view your squad according to playing position, or their physical condition or their level of morale. Or their average ratings, the number of goals they've scored, their assists (we've got *Fantasy Football* to thank for that), their Man of the Match awards, their disciplinary points, their estimated value, and even their weekly wage (if you want to make the lesser lights feel bad). Players' seasonal performance ratings are now recorded in three different ways: for domestic league games, for their country and also for European games. Number allocation is all click-and-draggable, too.

Formations, tactics, signings

Needless to say, the old formations and tactics have also been enhanced. You can stick a player anywhere you want to – basically, two support players, two sweepers and an anchor man are all yours for the asking. Again, it's all click and drag and, at last, you can cancel mistakes, and thankfully you're asked to confirm your changes before being plunged back into the fray with a goalkeeper at centre forward.

Other New Features

As well as all the improvements mentioned elsewhere, the new version includes all the teams in what's laughably known as the Scottish Football League – so Greenock Morton fans will finally stop moaning to us. The whole game now runs on a daily basis, which means that pre-season friendly games, essential for turning your mob of over-tanned, beer-soaked, bleach-haired slobs into a crack squad of pros, can now be arranged on a daily basis if necessary. This is also handy for running players you hate into the ground. And talking of players you hate, you know those players who simply refuse to leave the club, despite being transfer-listed for three years? You can give them a free transfer. And they die.



Aaaahhh...

A photograph of every team's stadium is displayed for home games. We particularly like this picture of a jam-packed Selhurst Park, scene of another thrilling Wimbledon performance.







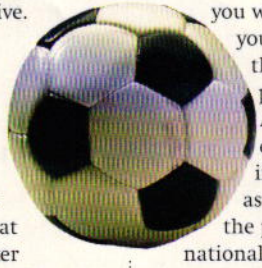


(Above) Just look at that formation! Now you know why Wales beat them.

Transfers are more realistic; you can offer players in exchange, and when you approach a player, he now thinks about it for a couple of days and gets back to you. And if he agrees to join, you might also have to agree to a number of outrageous demands: win bonuses, goal bonuses, domestic and European trophy bonuses are all there to haggle over. Then there are the clauses: relegation release clauses, automatic wage increase clauses, and even, in some cases, free transfer on expire of contract clauses. Just keep a razor-edged letter-opener in your desk drawer.

But what about gameplay?

Physical enormity, graphical and... er, interfacial slickness and statistical hammer-blows wouldn't mean a thing, of course, if the game didn't play well. But it does. It's great. In its previous incarnation it was addictive and engrossing to the point of being genuinely, worryingly obsessive. I'm talking about people staying in, hunched over their PC for whole weekends at a time with scarcely a break to finish a season; people going to bed and dreaming about their teams; people getting so involved that they talk about their computer teams at work, instead of real-life football. The difference between *Championship Manager* and every other football management game is that, while you're always aware that the others are games, this one actually becomes "real life".



Heeeeeere's Clive!

So this version is better, not only because there's so much more information to browse through, but because there are so many more permutations to play your teams in, and so many, many more players to set your beady eyes on. But because it also plays better and more intelligently – and even more importantly, it's got (gasp) Clive Tyldesley. Clive provides commentary for the game, which runs at the same time as the factual information pops up on screen. It's great – it manages to be atmospheric, entertaining and even funny on occasion. It slows the game down a bit, but it's worth it to hear the commentary. For once, digitised commentary isn't an annoyance that you want to switch off. (Although you can, if you want to speed the game up, or you just prefer hard facts.)

And as if all that wasn't enough for you, to cap it all if you perform well enough as a manager, you'll be offered the plum job of coaching the national side as well, and have the chance to have your face stuck on top of a turnip. So what are you waiting for, dummy? Go out and buy it. **Z**



Christmas Treats

The version that will be in the shops for the start of the football season will be lacking one or two enhancements that the developers are keen to include, but they want to get the game out on time. So if you buy the first version, you'll get a free upgrade (round about Christmas time) complete with any extra goodies they've since included. Bless.

Score

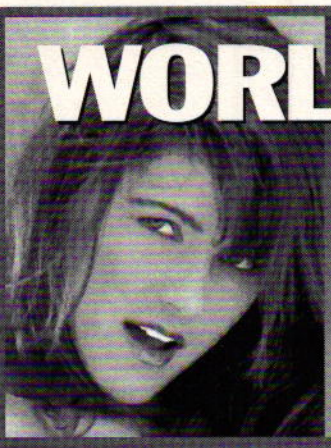
92

More addictive than Cheesums, Belgian choccies, surfing and crack.

Price: £44.99 (TBC) **Release Date:** September
Publisher: Domark
Tel: 0181-780 2222

Clive Tyldesley, Diamond Geezer

You've all heard Clive Tyldesley commentating. He's the one who gets lumbered with doing the obviously added-on-afterwards commentaries for goals from games that weren't important enough to feature properly (ie, they didn't include Manchester United or Liverpool). Apparently, when the designers approached him with a view to doing voiceovers for this, he was immediately enthusiastic. So they gave him a few game scenarios, and their idea of what had to be said for each. But rather than just plod through the scripts, he made up all his own commentary. And basically, it's absolutely brilliant. It adds loads to the game, is very entertaining and is even funny in places. He's not above the odd disparaging remark: "So simple for the goalkeeper – I could have stopped that myself!" There's even the subtle wind-up for tense situations: "It's a goal! ...no, side-netting, but everyone in the ground thought that was in..." You'll laugh about it later...



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It's a mag but not as





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THE MAGAZINE BUSINESS WEEKLY REPORT

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Kelvin MPEG 2MB

Duncan Swain shows us how his PC turns into a seedy cinema with mysterious, sticky patches on the carpet.

THE LINE BETWEEN PC'S AND complete home entertainment systems has been getting more and more hazy over the last couple of years. But now, with the introduction of PCTV's, which will let you watch TV whilst bashing away at your keyboard (a handy function that's about as useful as a chocolate teapot) and the huge amount of VideoCD's offering full-motion video feature films to watch from the comfort of your office-style swivel chair, the distinction is becoming less, well, distinct.

Ever since clever tech bods discovered that they could cram 74 minutes of video footage onto a standard CD, more and more films have been encoded in the VideoCD format, and there is now a wide range available from well-known cinema feature films, like *Naked Gun 33.3* and *Star Trek 1* and *2*, as well as old collectibles, such as a handful of Bruce Lee chopsocky-type titles, to some more rather risqué art house titles from the Redemption video label, such as *Female Vampire* and that classic (!), *Tender and Perverse Emmanuelle*.

If you want full-motion video playback on your PC, you're going to need extra hardware in the form of an MPEG card. Although there are software versions of MPEG available, these are not generally as efficient as a hardware solution and will, of course, slow your system down by using the processor to decode the MPEG data instead of the chips on-board an MPEG card. But what is MPEG? Well, it's the method of compression used during the encoding process to stuff data into the smallest possible space, which, when decoded, still produces an acceptably watchable picture during playback.

Orchid's Kelvin MPEG card gives you two cards for the price of one, and cuts down on the amount of fiddling around that occurs when installing the card. Most MPEG cards are standalones that have to be attached to your existing graphics card via the feature connector. The Kelvin MPEG is a combined 64-bit graphics and MPEG card, so as well as allowing full-screen video playback, you get accelerated *Windows* performance into the bargain, too. The Orchid Kelvin also comes with a lead to connect your sound card to the MPEG card, and a speaker jackpoint allowing you to control the MPEG audio volume through your sound card's mixer program under DOS or *Windows*.

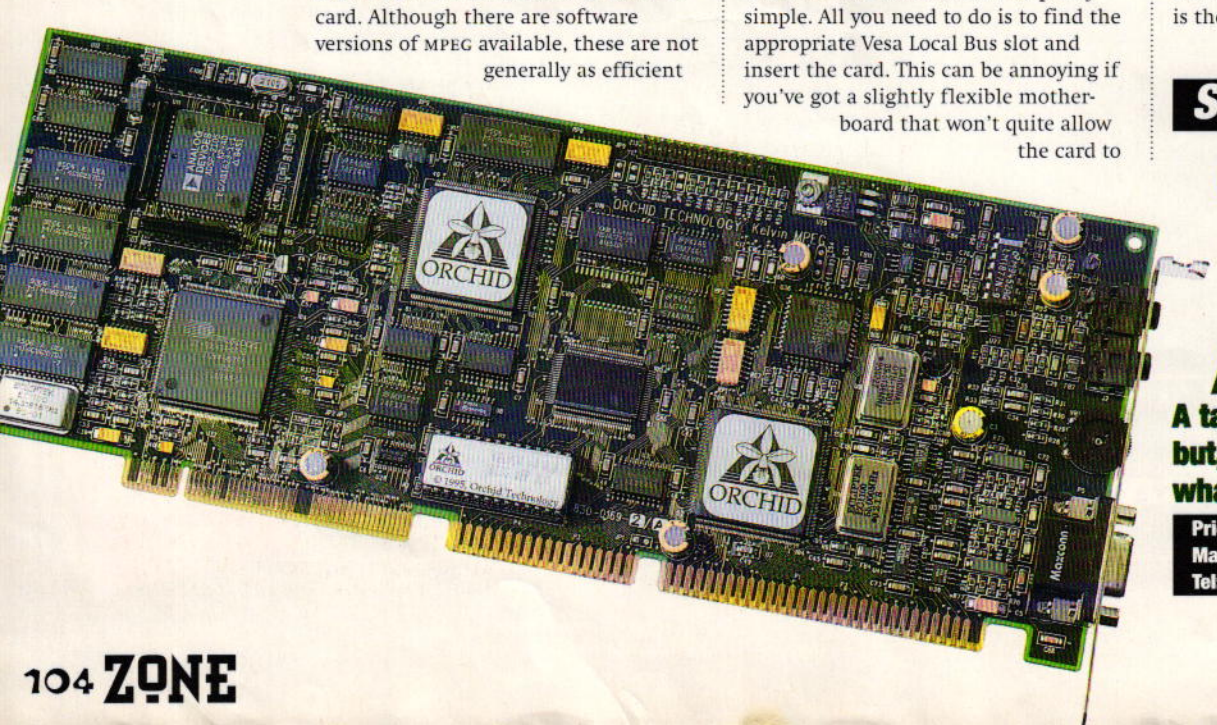
The soft touch

The hardware installation was pretty simple. All you need to do is to find the appropriate Vesa Local Bus slot and insert the card. This can be annoying if you've got a slightly flexible motherboard that won't quite allow the card to slot home properly, but don't be tempted to whip out a hammer and give it a whack – patience is a virtue and MPEG cards tend to break rather easily when confronted with a hammer blow.

The software installation was rather more tricky. We seemed to have been supplied with the wrong, or incorrectly labelled, disks, and although they contained the correct drivers, they couldn't be installed (as the manual suggested) under *Windows*. With the help of a knowledgeable friend, this was soon sorted out, but left to my own devices the hammer would have put in an appearance pretty soon.

The software is comprehensive, the control panel for the graphics card has all the necessary drivers and even DPMS power-saving features to power down your monitor when it's standing idle.

Obviously, the most important feature is the quality of playback you get from the MPEG card. We noticed no dropouts in frame rate when playing back in full-screen mode, and much of the quality degradation that can be noticed is usually due to the encoding process anyway, and this seems to have been pretty well sussed out now. So the only drawback with the Orchid Kelvin MPEG is the software installation, really. **Z**

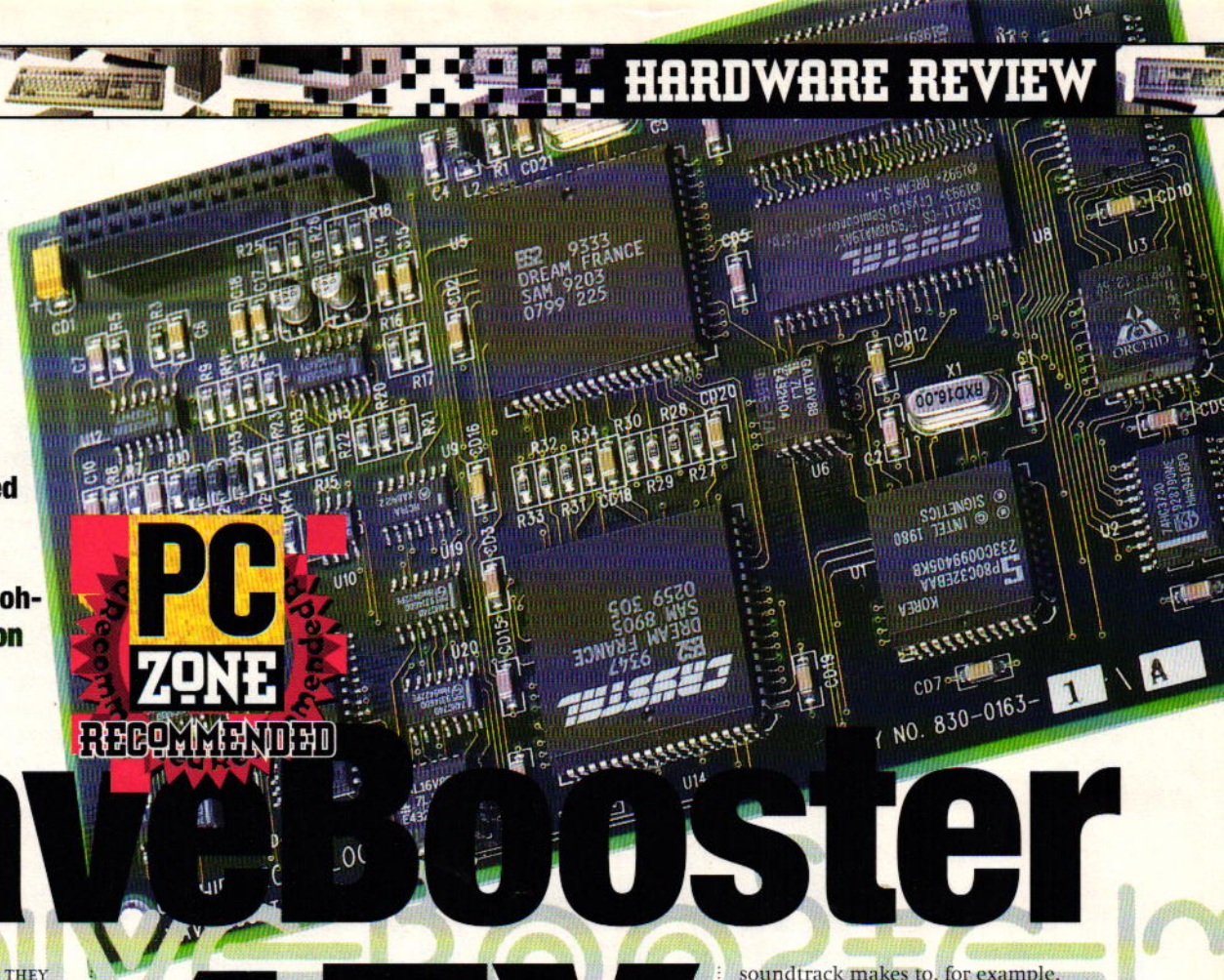


Score

75

A tad on the expensive side, but, as in all things, you get what you pay for.

Price: £407
Manufacturer: Orchid
Tel: 01256 479898



A wavetable daughterboard that slots onto a sound card that's slotted into a motherboard? It all sounds a wee bit feminine, so we let the oh-so-butch Dave Mathieson have a look.

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

WaveBooster 4FX

SOUND CARDS ARE GREAT, AS THEY are cards that fit inside your computer, which can play sounds. This facility is really excellent for games, as, when correctly synchronised with the action on screen, decent sound effects lend an air of realism that would simply not be possible without their inclusion.

Right, that's the patronising intro out of the way. It's pretty likely that everyone reading this has got some sort of sound card, and the fact that you can pick one up for about 50 quid nowadays means that only really skint people (who's best "might get lucky tonight" pants are fawn-coloured with brown trim) don't have one.

Of course, there are sound cards and there are (other) sound cards. While a cheapo 16-bit job is capable of playing digital sound effects at CD-quality, the music emanating from such cards is usually pretty crap. This is because most budget cards use older FM technology, which tries to emulate the sounds of instruments by combining simple waveforms. Although this may have been good enough for the *Human League* back in '83, today's sample-tastic kids want realistic sounds, which is where wavetables come in...

...A wavetable card makes beautiful music by using samples of "real" instruments, which are stored in chips on the card itself, thereby instantly reducing audio cheese-ness levels.

The WaveBooster from Orchid is a rather nifty daughterboard that slots into compatible sound cards, bringing the benefits of wavetable technology. The WaveBooster will slot into any card with a WaveBlaster expansion bus, which includes the Orchid SoundWave 32, Creative SoundBlaster 16, Media Vision Pro Audio Studio and lots more.

Easy peasy

Installing it is a piece of widdle, as it slots into the sound card in a "piggy-back" style. The included software enables you to fiddle about with various settings on the card, with particular emphasis on MIDI settings. While gamers are largely uninterested in such matters, for the budding muso out there, the control that you have over these parameters is *tres* important.

There are three versions of the WaveBooster. The basic 2MB card (£66) has the full range of General MIDI/Roland MT-32 instruments and drumkits, while the 4MB version (£90) contains alternative voices as as well. The model we have on test here – the 4FX – has 4MB of samples, too, but is also has a digital effects engine with which you can apply delay, reverb and chorus.

The card itself sounds great, with the wavetable-ness instantly making itself apparent. (Bear in mind that the game needs to be General MIDI or MT-32 compatible for you to enjoy these benefits.) The change that a decent soundtrack makes to, for example, *Descent*, has to be heard, and the big, meaty drum rolls and hefty bass lines definitely get the adrenaline pumping. If music is your thing, bear in mind that the 4FX provides most of the functions of a General MIDI sound module at less than half the price.

You might be wondering what the point is of such a card, as you can buy a cheap wavetable card for about the same price as the 2MB WaveBooster. Well, while this is true, if you already have a sound card, upgrading it this way makes more sense, as the sound quality is far better than most cheap cards. For games, you probably don't need the extra sounds that the 4MB models provide anyway, so you'll only have to spend £60. If you want to churn out your own "House" anthems, though, the 4FX is a bit of a bargain. Z

Score

85

Pretty smart add-on thing that'll make cheapo sound cards sing.

Price: £128
Manufacturer: Orchid
Tel: 01256 479898

Sick of your balls getting dusty? We gave Dave Mathieson a mouse without any balls at all to see if he could get it to perform.

Alfa Optic-PC Optical Mouse

DESPITE THE INCREASED AVAILABILITY of various substitutes, both straightforward (trackballs and pens) and wacky (like Creative Labs' Aeropoint), the trusty mouse is still most people's favourite pointing device. While back in the good old days, games like *Missile Command* used big, hefty trackballs, today's versions just don't cut the mustard when it comes to playing, and for most *Doom*-sters, some combination of mouse and keyboard is the preferred configuration.

The problem with mice is that they are mechanical, and everyone who's ever owned a washing machine will testify that things with moving parts always bugger up at some point. In the case of mice, they contain a little ball that moves two rollers (for the X and Y axes), which is used to move the cursor around on screen. The problem with this is that, most people's desktops are covered in fag ash, crisps, toenail clippings and spilt sugary coffee, which all collect on the mouse ball, causing horrible jerky movement.

Messy-balls free

Rather than using a ball, the Alfa Optic-PC works by shining light onto a special mat, and the reflection is used to track the mouse's position. Because there are no moving parts, the dreaded "dusty ball" syndrome is avoided.

To install the Alfa Optic, you just plug it in, and as it's compatible with existing mouse drivers, you don't have to install any special software (although you can if you want to). As you would expect, it's a bit of a smooth operator, to the extent of being a bit weird. It's not until you try it that you realise how much you rely on the way that the ball clunks around in conventional mice when playing *Doom*. Still, this is me being a bit fussy really, as you can't expect years of finely-honed *Doom*-playing techniques to be adapted to new hardware overnight.

The only problem with the Alfa Optic, and optical mice in general, is that you have to use the special mat that comes with it, but as most mouse mats are rubbish anyway, this shouldn't cause too many tears.

So if you're sick and tired of having to buy a new mouse every few months because you can't be arsed to clean them, then investing in an Alfa Optic makes a lot of sense. **Z**

Score

75

It's a mouse...
It uses light...
It's an optical mouse.

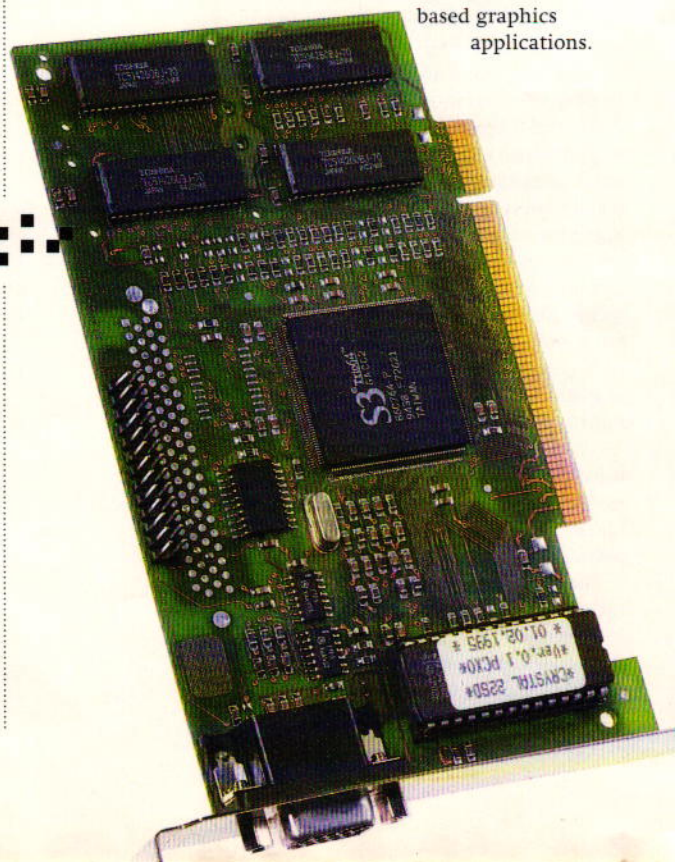
Price: £30
Manufacturer: Golden Image (UK) Ltd.
Tel: 0181 9009291

miro

GRAPHICS CARDS ARE USUALLY ONE of the last things that most people choose to upgrade, simply because all PC's already have one fitted. The thing is, if you only use your PC for playing VGA games with the odd bit of word-processing thrown in, there's not that much point in upgrading anyway. Even the cheapest, crappiest cards fitted to modern PC's are perfectly capable of displaying standard VGA graphics (used in games), and they should also be able to display *Windows* in 800x600 in 256 colours (which is all you need for most applications).

The problems tend to arise when you want to use more colours in *Windows*; if you want to use graphics packages, for example. As soon as you start upping the number of colours on screen, there are two factors to be taken into account. Firstly, more colours need more memory on the card, and the most a 1MB card can manage in 800x600 resolution is 65000. Secondly, because higher resolutions and lots of colours take up more memory, a slow card will be even slower in these modes, to the point of becoming unusable (or at least extremely annoying).

The miroCrystal 22SD is a 2MB PCI graphics card that supports *Windows* resolutions up to 1280x1024, although the maximum in true-colour mode (24 million colours) is 800x600. This means that it's good enough for most *Windows*-based graphics applications.





Crystal 22SD Graphics card

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

Want a card to display some graphics? Dave Mathieson looks at a likely-sounding contender.

What's the difference?

Of course, the question that everyone wants to know is, "does a decent graphics card make a lot of difference to games?" Well, there's generally a bit of confusion about this one. The main thing to remember is that, accelerated graphics cards are only designed to speed up *Windows* – the "accelerated-ness" makes no difference at all to DOS games. However, decent graphics cards (like the miro) tend to have faster components all round, especially the on-board memory, and this does make a difference. I tried out the *Doom2* frame-rate test on a DX2/66, and the 22SD definitely showed an improvement over the cheapo card that was already fitted.

While it's doubtful whether it's worth spending £140 on a graphics card just to speed up games a bit (you'd be better off spending the money on a new CPU), the miroCrystal 22SD is a nice card for *Windows* work, and its price makes it well worth looking at if or when you decide to upgrade. Z

Score

80

A nice two meg graphics card that'll tart-up *Windows* performance.

Price: £139
Manufacturer: miro
Tel: 01494 510250

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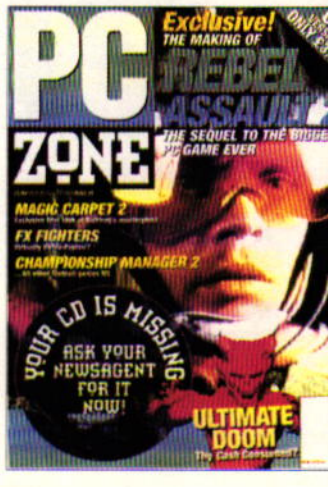
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If you get into trouble or are a bit scared, ring us on TruePlayer Tips day (Wednesday 2pm to 6pm) for free tips support.

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The Boggit's Mailbag

AFTER THE UNTIMELY DEMISE OF the original Hackmaster and his ensuing reincarnation, we are now changing the structure of the tips section in *PC Zone*.

As ever, we feature the eternal struggle between the Hackmasters and the Trueplayers, but this will now be presided over by the new Troubleshooter... The Boggit. Yes, yes, he has got a daft name, but he really knows his stuff. Honest. After proving his worth in last month's issue with the truly inspiring *Discworld* Trueplayer guide, we have now given him *carte blanche* with this section.

Each month he'll be bringing you the latest in hints, cheats, walkthroughs, and for his sins, we've managed to convince the miserable, grumpy, old bastard to reply to any letters that you may want to send in.

Over to you

Remember when you write, keep your questions short (about as much as you can write on the back of a five pound note) and respectful. Hold tight, and here we go...

Lands of Lore

I hope you can help with the *Lands of Lore* because, despite having a solution to the game, I still can't get past one part of it.

I am searching for the Mother of Earth, which is the fourth ingredient I need to make the magical elixir. I know that the female called Sadie, who lives in the town of Yvel, is the character who gives you this ingredient, but the bitch won't give it to me! I go in and out of her location, hoping something will trigger her to give me the item, but nothing happens.

Bob MacDonald, Coventry

Would I be right in thinking that you are the kind of sneaky git who is prone to dodge paying for his round of drinks? There are some humans who can enter the revolving door to a pub in front of you – and then come out behind you. Sadie will only offer you the Mother of Earth if you already know that she has it. The usual way that players find out this fact is by buying the info from the witch doctor in the swamp.

Of course, if you tried to be smart and saved the game before asking the question, then reloaded the game after you gained the information, I'm afraid the game outsmarted you. If the game doesn't know that you asked the question, then Sadie won't offer you the ingredient. Stop being so bloody mean and go and pay the man.

Hand of Fate

I have been trying, unsuccessfully, to make the potion for the Skeptic spell at the Altar of Doubt, but it won't work. I'm sure I've got all the ingredients I need, but it doesn't work. Can you tell me what I need?

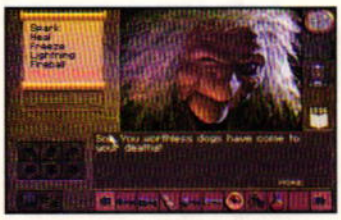
John Howard, Canterbury

I suspect that you can't tell a lucky horseshoe from an unlucky one. I thought all horseshoes were lucky (apart from the ones still on the feet of a horse), but it appears that the lucky ones are those with the ends pointing up (like a "U"). Old wives say, that if your horseshoe is held the other way, then the magic will drain out. You also need mud from a puddle used on the rabbit statue to get a footprint. Mix vinegar and root beer in a bowl to make the sauce. You can get reptile tears by taking

Write to PC Zone

If you have a query concerning a role-playing game or adventure, or you have a hot tip or a cheat to share, then write to:

The Boggit
29 Blackthorn Drive
Larkfield, Aylesford
KENT ME20 6NR



FX-Fighter Hints and Cheats Special

Part One

the dragon's bowl away. Mix the lot and you'll get a purple potion. Place the potion on the Altar of Doubt and stand well back.

Dracula Unleashed

I don't know if a kick in the rocks will kill a vampire, but I'm getting to the point where I'm prepared to try it. I've been playing *Dracula Unleashed* for longer than I would be prepared to admit to anyone, and I still can't get past Day 1. Whenever I leave home in Day 2, a vampire turns up and kills me. Tell me, what do I need to do to get rid of the blood-sucking sonofabitch?

Steve Rainsbury, Norwich

*All the vampires that I've met avoid the sun's rays like the Conservatives avoid a general election. Yet in this silly game you can stay in bed until lunchtime before venturing outside on Day 2 and you'll still get ragged, bagged and *$%!@ed. Like Dracula himself, this game looks impressive in the dark, but in the bright light of day, it's naff.*

Day 1:

7:05am: Annisette

8:30am: Telegraph (Have Jano's card in your hand.)

9:30am: News-stand

9:50am: Holmwood

10:25am: Saucy Jack

11:45am: Bookstore

12:40pm: Harker Home

1:10pm: Asylum

3:00pm: Holmwood

4:10pm: Harker's Office (Have Quincey's present in your hand.)

5:25pm: Annisette (Have the necklace in your hand.)

10:00pm: Asylum

10:50pm: Go Home and read the telegram from Father Janos and sleep.

Conquests of the Longbow

I've been playing *The Legend of Robin Hood* from Sierra for some time now, but things aren't going too well. Amongst other things, I've met Maid Marion waltzing around in the Willow Grove, but I'm not sure what I'm supposed to do. I'm sure I've got to give her something, but I don't know what.

Bob Dyer, Brighton

Don't know what to give her, eh? I could be extremely predictable and smutty here, but I'm too darn sophis to give in to it, so here's the straight answer... Look, she's a girlie, and everyone knows that you must give girlies presents. Give her the silver comb that you got from Lobb. Once you've given her that she'll trust you. In my day you could get away with a bag of chips and a pickled onion, but times change (bah!). If you've got it, give her the heart-shaped emerald, too.







THIS FAST-ACTION beat 'em up may be the final answer to every joystick waggler's dream, but unless you work out all of the special moves that each of the characters can do, you're going to end up as mincemeat.

Especially for you, I have produced a list of those secret moves that should gain you the golden gloves.

What we have here is the first part of a two-part guide to all of the complicated moves in the game. This month we'll concentrate on the basics, along with the special moves for three of the most popular characters.

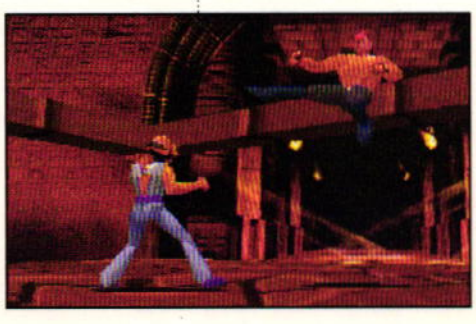
Key Legend

All moves are listed using the following letters and symbols:

P	means Punch
K	means Kick
B	means Back
F	means Forward
U	means Up
D	means Down
+	means and (ie B+P Back and Punch)
/	means Angle (ie B/D Hold Down and Back)
,	means Release First (ie F,F+P Forward, release, Forward and Punch)
->	means Roll Keypad (ie B -> D Roll Back to Down)
then	means Hold and Do (ie D then P Hold down then hit P)

Basic Moves for All Players

Kick	Button 1
Punch	Button 2
Advance	Left or Right
Retreat	Left or Right
Duck	Down
Jump	Up
Block	Away + Punch
Jump Kick	F/B, U+K
Trounce (Jump on when down)	U+P



After Knockdown Moves

(Moves to do when you have been knocked down.)

Roll Away	B
Roll Towards	F
Sweep	D+K (Hit kick repeatedly)
KickStand	When Head is toward opponent press K repeatedly

Ashraf

Punch Moves:

Hammer Punch	D+P
Elbow Lunge	F, D+P
Energy Push	F, D, F+P
UpperCut	B, P (fast)
Charging Punch	F+P
Charging BackBreaker	F+P, D+P
Charging Elbow Push	F+P, F+P F, U+P

Kick Moves:

Handstand Kick	F, B+K
Jumping Roundhouse	U, K (fast)
Super Backflip!	B, F, F, F+P, D+K
Charging Spin Kick	F+P, U+K

Combo Moves:

2-hit Combo	F, B, P
3-hit Combo	F, B, F+P
3-hit Combo	U, K, D+P, K

Rolling Moves:

Roll Clockwise	D/F+P (keep hitting punch to roll)

Projectile Throw:

FireBall	B, F+P

Cyben 30

Punch Moves:

Torpedo Lunge	B, F, P
Head Shock	F+P
Running Punch	F, F+P
Spinning Punch	U+P (short distance from opp.)
Rocket Lift	U+P (right next to Opp.)

Kick Moves:

Kick1	D+K
Kick2	F+K
DropKick	B+K
BackKick	K (jump over opp. and hit when back is to them)

Jake

Punch Moves:

Headlock Bash	F, F, F+P (close)
Sweep	B, D+P
Backhand	B, P
Overhead Bash	U+P (close)
Lift 'n' Slam	F->B+P (close)
Backhand Spring Away	U->B->D (quick)
Elbow Hook Toss	U->F->D+P
Head Clap	F->D+P (close)
HeadButt	F, F+P (do at a short distance)
Quick Punches	F, F+P (do when close)
Quick Lunge	F->U+P
Shoulder Bash	F+P
Hammer Punch	D+P
Spinning UpperCut	B, F, P
UpperCut	B, F+P
Rabbit Punch	F, F, P, P

Kick Moves:

SpinKick	B+K
Scissors Takedown	F->D+K

Combo Moves:

2-hit Combo	F, F+P
2-hit Combo	P, P
2-hit Combo	F+P, B+K
2-hit Combo	F+P, B, D+K
3-hit Combo	F, B+P
6-hit Combo!	F+P, B+P, F+D, D+K
INFINITY Combo!	F, B+P, U+K (repeat as often as wanted.)

Rolling Moves:

Roll Clockwise	P Then D/F (keep hitting D/F to keep rolling.)

Space, the final frontier, is the setting for this fiendishly difficult game starring Captain Picard and co. And since there's no Captain Kirk wuss level in this baby, you'll be needing *PC Zone*'s ultimate players guide. Here's part one.

THE TRUEPLAYERS™

Star Trek The Next Generation "A Final Unity"

Part One



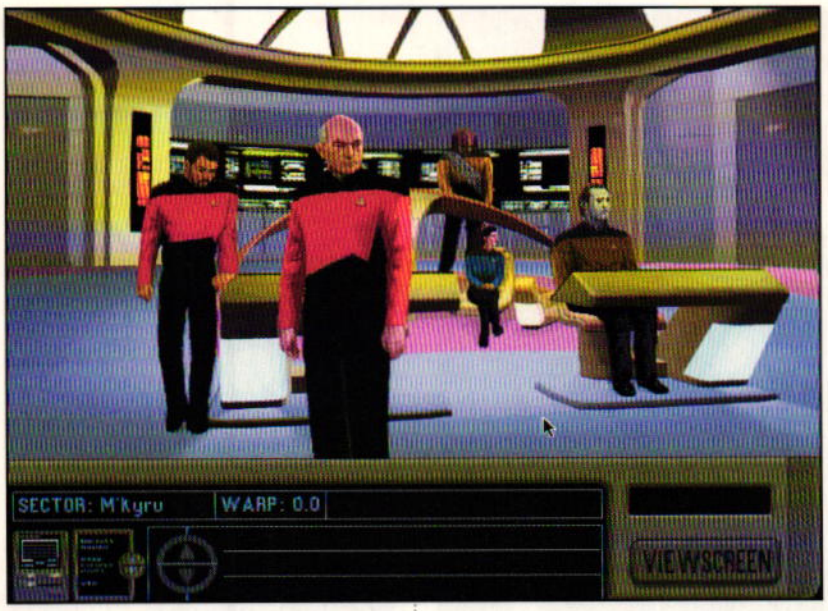
THE DIFFICULT TRICK AT THIS POINT is to write a short introduction to this walkthrough, without mentioning the word "boldly". There are zillions of you out there who have spent heavy cash in this latest addition to the mountain of *Star Trek* paraphernalia, so the least I can do is provide a complete breakdown of the complex mission. You should also note that I am playing the game in Ensign Mode as I have no wish to end up as that faceless guy who always beams down to the planet with Kirk – and never beams back up again.

"Ensign Bodybag, you have the helm."

1 Talk with Data
2 Break transporter beam with Enterprise
3 Talk with Warbird Commander
4 "Surrender your ship..."
5 "They are my guests..."
6 "I should like to consider..."
7 Talk with T'Bak
8 "What is this fifth scroll...?"
9 "Who is the Lawgiver...?"
10 "Why are you...?"
11 "What makes you think...?"
12 "If you'll excuse me..."
13 Talk with Lucana
14 "Who are the Plebeians?"
15 "Why are you...?"
16 "I sympathise with your cause..."
17 Talk with Avakar
18 Talk with T'Bak again
19 "I have decided..."
20 "Understood. We will be..."
21 Set course for Horst III, warp 5
22 Put Cymkoe IV transmission on screen
23 Set course for Cymkoe IV, warp 7
24 Go to the Transporter Room via the Turbolift
25 Away Team: Crusher, Riker, LaForge, and Worf
Items: Phaser, Tricorder, Med-Kit, and Medical Tricorder

Mertens power station

26 Geordi looks at Power Monitor
27 Walk out of room
28 Walk to woman trapped under the cable
29 Crusher uses Med-Tricoder on trapped woman
30 Riker users phaser on data transfer line
31 Use tricorder on data transfer line
32 Use tricorder on woman
33 Use tricoder on Piece of Cable
34 Walk back to transporter room
35 Geordi uses transporter panel
36 Press Lock on
37 Select data cable
38 Energise
39 Walk back to woman under cable
40 Crusher uses med-kit on injured woman
41 Talk to woman
42 "How are you feeling...?"
43 "What happened...?"
44 "We'll get you beamed..."
45 Walk to turbo lift off right side of screen
46 Go to Administration
47 Geordi uses control panel
48 Use Emergency Systems



(Left) The bridge... where all of the magic happens.

(Below) Playing in levels other than Ensign means that you have to work really hard.

49 Use Power Redirect
50 Exit Screen
51 Talk with Riker
52 Walk to Turbolift
53 Select Engineering
54 Geordi looks at strange machine
55 Geordi uses tricorder on strange machine
56 Walk to Engineering Lab 4 (Exit right)
57 Get items from equipment cart
- Plasma shunt
- Flux router
- Wave Convertor
- Graviton Probe
- Invertor Coupling
- Pulse Negator

58 Talk with Riker then use Control Panel
59 Initiate Temporary Shutdown
60 Shut down groups 1, 2 and 3
61 "I'd like to chase..."
62 Walk to door
63 Walk to Core Control Room
64 Geordi talks with Dr Griems
65 "Dr Griems, I'm Chief Engineer..."
66 "Sounds like you could..."
67 Walk to door
68 Geordi uses Invertor Coupling on hole in casing
69 Geordi uses wave convertor on hole in casing
70 End missing - save game
71 Set course for Horst III, warp 5

Horst III

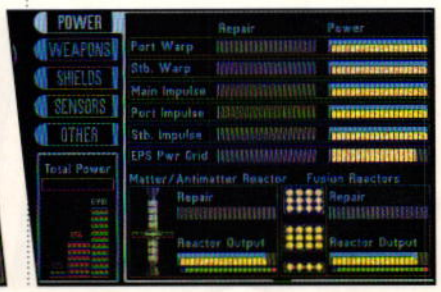
72 From Comms, talk to Shanok
73 "Shanok, we have..."
74 "What brings...?"
75 What have you...?"
76 "I'm afraid..."
77 "I'd be most eager..."
78 Set course for the Ruinore sector
79 Put Admiral Redrick's message on screen
80 "A lamb?"
81 "Morrasia? Isn't that...?"
82 "Who exactly...?"
83 Very well..."
84 Engage to Morrasia, warp 5

Morrasia

85 Talk with Constable Lliksze
86 "We will respect..."
87 Go to Transporter Room
88 Away Team: Troi, Worf, Data, and Crusher
Equipment: Tricoder
89 Data talks to the Constable
90 "Who were the last...?"
91 "If the doctor..."
92 "Your tone suggests..."
93 "The Preserve..."
94 "I would like to..."
95 Walk to doorway
96 Walk to Lab
97 Data looks at and then takes Field Units A, B and C
98 Data uses Tricoder on Bioprobe then takes Bioprobe
99 Place 3 carcasses on biotable one at a time for investigation
100 Place 3 carcasses under sonic scope for investigation
101 Use Tricoder on Comm Port
102 Open a channel to Tracker Melas
103 "We found your name..."
104 "You mentioned..."
105 "Without the generator..."
106 "I have some questions..."
107 "The boar's identity..."
108 "A creature tagged as a Kuojon Gibbon..."
109 "One creature..."
110 "It's cause of death..."
111 "A creature tagged as a frednorean boar..."
112 "The 'blowup' you mentioned..."
113 "What exactly are the watchers responsibilities...?"
114 "Smuggling is a serious..."
115 Leave Lab and walk to the Constable's office
116 Data talks to the Constable
117 "Constable, I would like to know..."
118 "How do you explain..."
119 "Constable, I understand..."
120 "Why do you..."
121 Talk with Troi, then leave the office and head back to the lab
122 Talk with Worf
123 Use Tricorder on Comm Port
124 Open channel to Consultant Iydia
125 "Constable Lliksze mentioned..."
126 "I'd like to know..."
127 "I have some questions..."
128 "A creature tagged as a frednorean boar.."
129 "A creature tagged as a Koujon Gibbon..."
130 "A Mycordae Mole..."
131 "But Dr Hyunh-Foertsch..."
132 Use any character to talk with Data
133 Leave the lab and walk to the crossroads
134 Walk to shuttle dock
135 Look at, and then get the microgenerator
136 Exit the Shuttlebay
137 Go to the Marine Isotope
138 Use Tricorder on screen and on Field Units A, B and C
139 Data places Microgenerator on power port
140 Data uses Field Unit "C" on all four nearby Jellycorals
141 Data uses Bioprobe on Field Unit four times to extract four samples. »







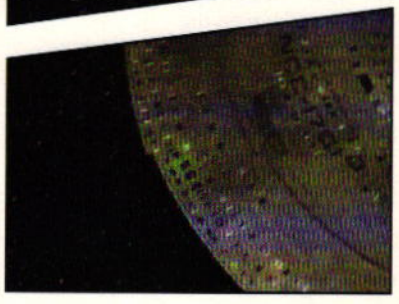


SPOILED

142 Data gets Microgenerator
143 Exit Biotope
144 Go to Bogforest Biotope
145 Use Microgenerator on Power Port
146 Use Field Unit "B" on Tunnel 1
147 Use Field Unit "B" on Tunnel 2
148 Use Field Unit "B" on Tunnel 3
149 Use Field Unit "B" on Tunnel 4
150 Use bioprobe on field unit four times to extract four samples
151 Get Microgenerator
152 Leave Biotope
153 Walk to crossroads
154 Walk to Canyon biotope
155 Use Microgenerator on power port
156 Use remaining Field Unit "A" on Pit
157 Use Field Unit "A" on Caverns
158 Use Field Unit "A" on Crater
159 Use bioprobe on Field unit three times to collect three samples
160 Get Microgenerator
161 Exit biotope
162 Get fruit
163 Give fruit to tree monkey
164 Walk to lab
165 Use tricorder on samples
166 Use ALL samples on Sonic Scope
167 Talk with Worf
168 Data uses Tricorder on Comm Port
169 Open a channel to Healer Zzolis
170 "Tracker Melas indicated..."
171 "On several occasions..."
172 "Did the other watchers...?" -
173 Look at Neuroscans
174 Exit lab
175 Go to crossroads
176 Go to the Quarantine Shelter
177 Talk with Watcher Tzudan
178 "What creature..."
179 "I have examined..."
180 "Were you the one...?"
181 "Why did you not ask...?"
182 "When did you last see...?"
183 Talk with Worf
184 Leave Quarantine Shelter
185 Walk to the Constable's Office
186 Data talk to the Constable
187 Talk with Worf
188 Leave the Office
189 Walk to Shuttledock
190 Walk to Shuttle
191 Data to use tricorder on the Utilities Network
192 Data to use tricorder on Utilities trunk
193 Use Utilities trunk
194 Exit Room
195 Talk to Doctor
196 Look at consoles 1, 2 and 3
197 Use Console 2
198 Use Console 1
199 Use Console 3
200 End mission
201 Set course for Joward III to meet Aramat
202 Set course for the Nigold System
203 "Hail them Mr Worf"
204 "Mr Worf, prepare a tractor beam..."
205 "Shields up..."
206 "This is Captain... you are in violation..."

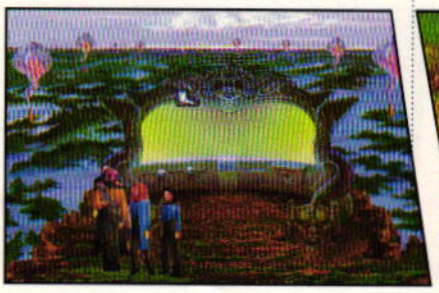






207 Lay in course to Shonoisho Epsilon 6, warp 5
208 Hail planet from Comms.
209 Talk with Data
210 Talk with Riker
211 Talk with Troi
212 Talk with T'Bak
213 Wait and then talk with Chancellor Laraq
214 "We have several..."
215 Talk with Starfleet to pass the time and check performance so far.
216 Talk with Laraq
217 Go to Transporter Room
218 Away Team: Riker, Data, Crusher and LaForge Equipment: Phaser and Tricorder
219 Beam down

That's all for this month *Trek* fans. Beam down to your newsagents next month for the concluding part of this saga. Z







(Above) A big scary Warbird. Eek!

(Left) The pointy-clicky bits are where you're going to encounter the worst problems.

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ZONE ON-LINE

This month, in our continuing quest for the ultimate Hayes-compatible thrills, we delve/penetrate/endoscope the steaming interiors of CIX – pronounced "kicks" – a sprawling Bulletin Board system, based in conservative Kingston, London.

CIX IS BASICALLY A BIG BBS. A VERY BIG BBS, ACTUALLY. In fact, it's huge. Take your local BBS with its DOS front-end, 12 lines, 20-odd message forums, and a gig and a bit of downloadable files. Now add a custom-made *Windows*-based Off Line Reader (OLR), over one hundred lines, sprinkle thousands (no joke) of conferences, forums and discussion areas, and then bake for seven years to accumulate over 10,000 members and millions of messages. Garnish with full Internet Usenet access (another thousand conferences), FTP (so you can download from the Internet), and a full rack of 28,000 baud lines, and you have not just a crap Ready, Steady, Cook metaphor, but also CIX. In a nutshell.

THE GIST

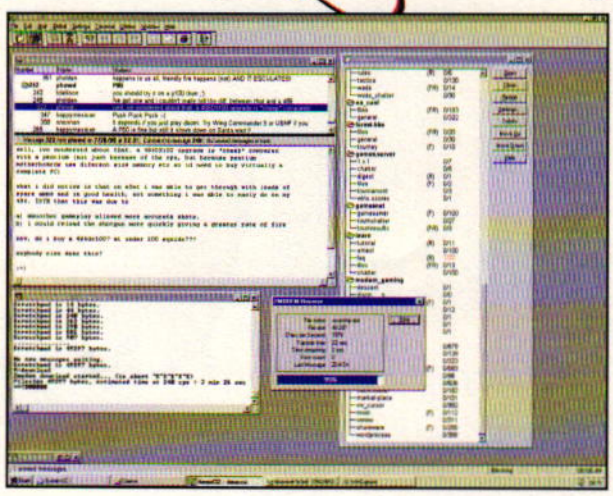
CIX is basically a message-based system. Which means, essentially, that it skirts the sauntering aimlessness of the World Wide Web and the multi-layered complexity of CompuServe, and is, instead, a simple list of forums (over 8,000 of the beasts). Each of these forums is sub-divided into around five to 20 conferences, each in turn containing hundreds of messages and downloadable files.

Wit

CIX has an informal, clubby sort of feel with its pithy British chat contrasting pointedly with CompuServe's holier-than-thou Christian Fundamentalist approach. This little table says it all:

Event	Response	
	CIS	CIX
Post a message advertising anything (yourself, your car, your BBS) *	<message deleted>	Nice one babe
Swear in a forum	<message deleted>	Fine by us, lovely
Get annoyed and have a passionate argument	Desist, you might offend someone	Fight! Fight! Fight!
Think of a good idea for a forum	Find and pay to use an existing forum which might not cater exactly to your desires.	Start one yourself. for free
Want to reminisce about old crap TV programmes	Magnum PI, Bonanza, Mary TylerMoore	Blackadder, Are You Being Served, Minder
Does anyone want to play Doom2 deathmatch?	Yeah, hi I'm Bud from NewYork.	Yeah, hi I'm Dave from Swindon.

*for example, we placed an "ad" for our forthcoming PC Zone Mother Of All Doom2 Tournaments at the Computer Shopper Show last year. It was spiked because it was said to promote our magazine. "Jeez," we said. "You are Satan incarnate," they replied.



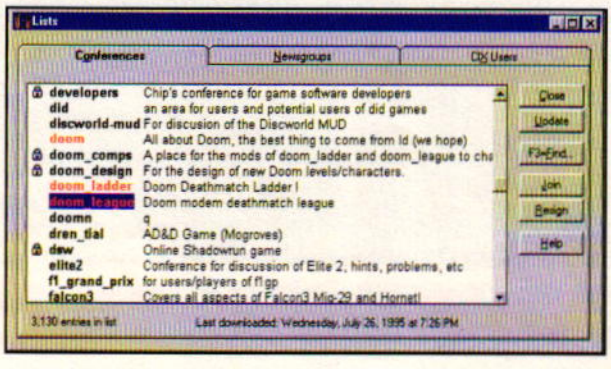
THE FORUMS

The list of forums is gargantuan, but every subject you could possibly be interested in or pathologically addicted to, is here. If you're an acne-based computo-nerd, there are reams of programming forums covering well-known stuff, such as Assembler, C++ and Visual Basic, to obscura, such as COBOL, REXX and other stuff Arthur C. Clarke probably thought of years before they were invented. In the Business section, you will find conferences on Marketing, Consultancies (yawn) and Trade Unions, but you'll find "closed" conferences, operated by companies like the BBC, inaccessible by the general CIX public, where disgruntled employees slag off their bosses.

More interesting is the Games area, which is solid with forums on *Quake, SimCity, Terminal Velocity, Descent* and, of course, *Doom* (a good 3000 messages alone). There are also major discussion areas organised, which are frequented by those geniuses Electronic Arts, Team 17 and Bullfrog. That general area also plays host to the unbelievably active *PC Zone* conference, which is quite the most splendid thing in the whole wide world.

The Media bit contains huge conferences, which are set up by publications, such as *Private Eye, The Guardian, The Times*, and *The Fortean Times*. Here you can moan and try to make an "impact" with your witty messages and observations. Or maybe not. Delving deeper down the list reveals discussions of "life-style" items, such as leisure (Anime, Comics, Philip K. Dick and – no joke – Patsy Kensit); music (*Rave, Oasis, Prince*, and, erk, Eric Clapton); and TV (*Alien Nation, Red Dwarf, The Simpons, X-Files* and, *naturallement, Star Trek: TNG*).

The list goes on, encompassing role-playing games (sad),

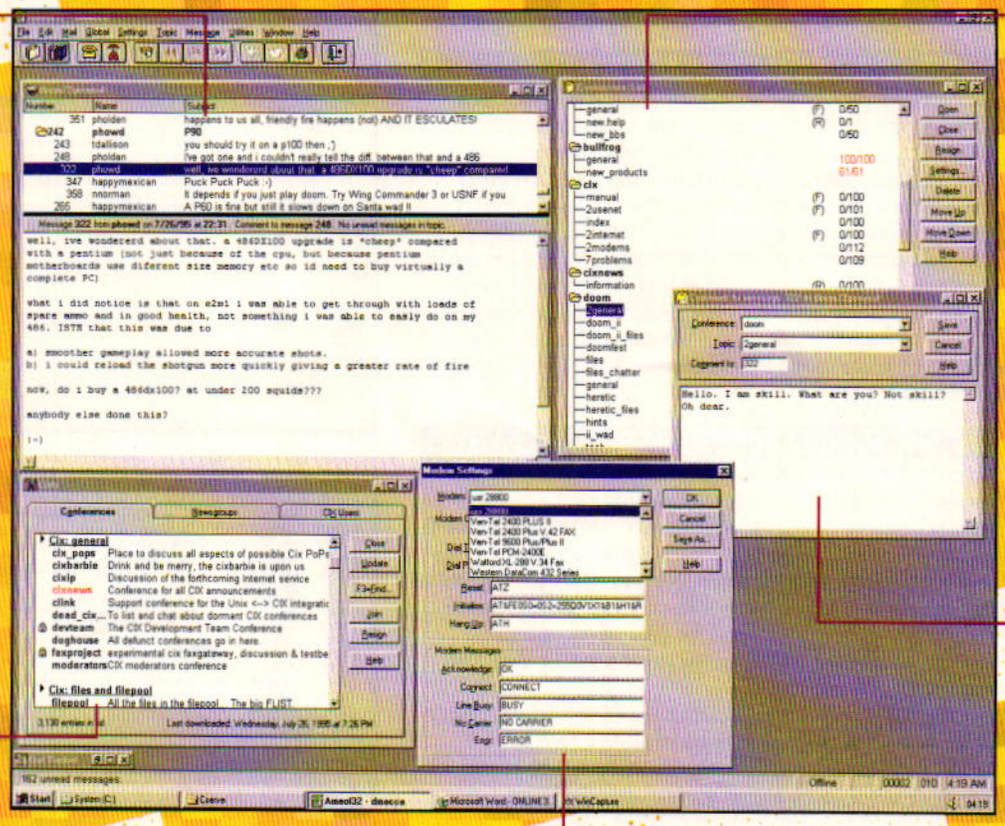


Ameol

The main advantage with CIX is that it is cheap. Not just in terms of on-line charges, but because it uses an Off-Line-Reader to connect you to the service. Unlike a Web browser or CompuServe's WinCim, which are on-line services (ie you're on the phone and spending money every moment you use them), CIX's custom OLR, Ameol, logs on and downloads all the messages, file lists, conferences and mail that you want, and then logs off, allowing you to browse all the info and decide what you want to download without having to clog up your phone line and spend mega-bucks. It also turns CIX into an invaluable reference bible, as all the messages ever posted are stored on the mainframes at CIX HQ for you to retrieve at any time.

The shareware version of Ameol is on this month's coverdisk, but here's a quick glimpse at some of its very best features.

MAIN WINDOW
The main window lists all the messages in the selected forum. You can scroll through them with the cursor keys. Bold messages denote the start of a "thread", where all the messages after deal with that subject until a new subject is started. Message bases can be kept for as long as you have the hard disk space. If you're running out you can purge (delete) or compact (compress) entire areas to make them more manageable.



CONFERENCE LIST
This allows you to keep track of all the areas you've joined, how many messages there are, and what libraries are available. Red text denotes unread messages (which you can flick through by pressing "Enter"), while (F) and (R) denotes downloadable files in that area and restricted access respectively. You can resign a forum any time you like. The message base will stay on your system until you feel like "purging" it.

LISTS
You can have as many windows open simultaneously as you like. Here, I'm browsing absent-mindedly through the 3,000-odd conferences that CIX has to offer. Hmmm, Creole Cooking Forum... excellente.

MODEM SETTINGS
Ameol supports pretty much all recent popular and unpopular modems, so you should have no hassle connecting with your obscure, unbadged Taiwanese internal thing. It'll also connect at baud rates between 2400 (very unfashionable) to 28800 (very cool). At 28K, you can get transfer rates of between 3000 characters per second (ZIP files) and 5700 (compressible files such as text).

MESSAGE WINDOW
You can comment to any message in the main window, or you can start your own "thread" to which other people will attach witty messages.

The cool thing about CIX is that it automatically gives you an internet address (ie PCZONE@cix.compulink.co.uk), so you can mail to anyone else in the entire world.

Science Fiction (sad-ish), Writing And Literature (poncey), Philosophy (ninja-poncey), Classified Ads (not bad, really), Education (truly yawny except for A-Level forum where you can post your tricky Maths questions), Wine (God!), and Health And Fitness (snore).

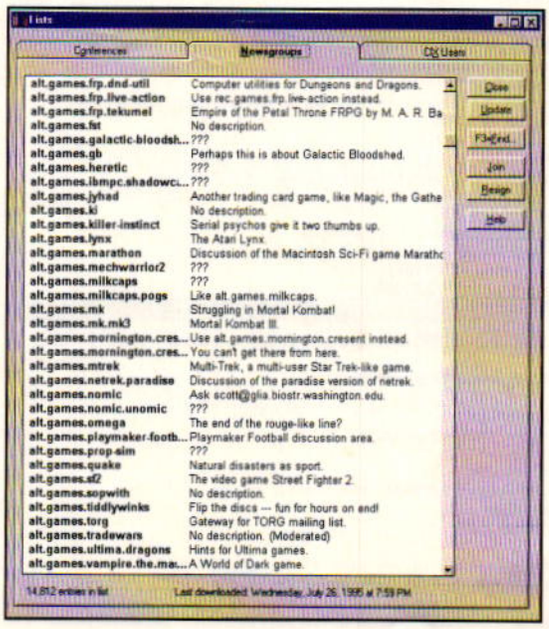
At this point I had to stop. My head was going all wibbly at the sheer enormity of the list (a bit like the crap bit in *2001* when Dave falls into the black thing and sees the entire universe in one second).

USENET

Too big to go into now, and too complex to ever go into, the whole Internet Usenet universe is open to you, free of additional charge, via CIX.

All 14,812 Usenet newsgroups (like CIX groups) are there, covering a spleen-splittingly vast range of subjects, from Mythology And Hints Of Using Atria's Clearcouse SCM, through ALT.GAMES.DOOM, right into ALT.MUSIC.ALICE.IN.CHAINS. Every goddamn subject you can think of. Of course, the whole thing is stink full of Americans, but you get used to them.

Some conferences have been around for years, some are only a month old, and some were created yesterday. If you need information on any subject, Usenet is where you go. »



Places of Interest

***There are, technically, zillions of places of interest on CIX, depending on what you're interested in, but, we reckon, the best places to explore first are* Doom, Auction, *and, mais oui,* PC Zone.**

DOOM CONFERENCE

The *Doom* forum is mammoth. Nothing you've ever heard can prepare you for the scale at which this game has ignited the gameplayer's imagination. *Doom* contains over 10,000 messages, going back two years, and squeezed into various forums, such as Wad_Chatter, *Heretic*, Wishlist etc.

Conversations rang from the banal ("What is the difference between Deathmatch 1 and 2?" and "What are the *Doom* cheat codes?"), to full-scale thermonuclear arguments about which graphics card is best for *Doom* (Stealth 32 VL, apparently) and who's the best at Deathmatch (no comment). It's not as boring as it sounds (honest), and the conference expands by a good 30 messages a day.

DOOM LEAGUE AND LADDER

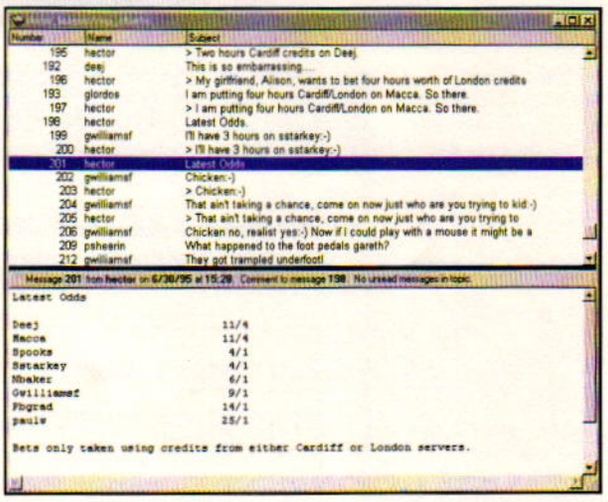
Allied to the *Doom* conference are the modem-deathmatch orientated League and Ladder conferences. The Ladder – currently sporting 30-odd *Doom* die-hards – works like a squash ladder; you start at the bottom, challenging people up to two places above you, taking their places if you win. *Doom 2* 1.666 is the version of choice at the moment, but levels are varied, normally focusing on 1, 7, 8, and 11, plus the occasional deathmatch WAD. The Ladder is updated on a daily basis and only good players need apply.

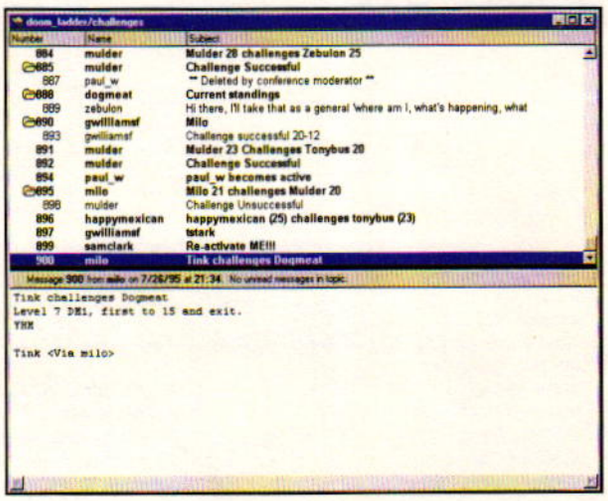
The League is slightly more exclusive and was started about three months ago. Forty players are organised into five divisions (graded on skill), and over 14 weeks, every player fights every other player twice, over a variety of levels.

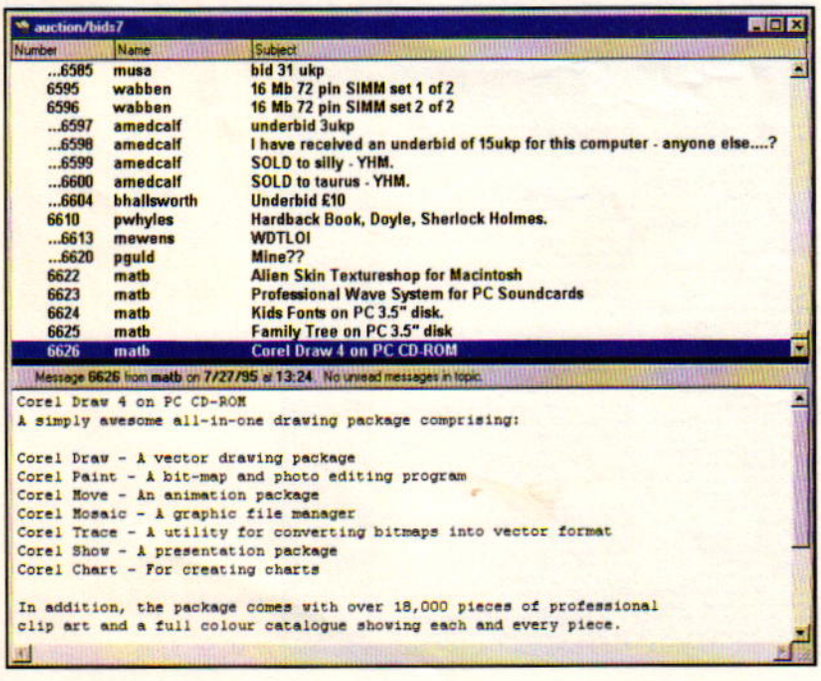
There's lots of post deathmatch chitchat ("Well played, you bastard", "God I hate the BFG" etc,), and the strict rules are wielded without passion, by the moderators of each division (if you don't play your game in time, your match is defaulted and you lose points).

Running concurrently with that is the League Cup, a knockout competition, where 42 aces play a Wimbledon-style sudden-death knockout arrangement, and spectators gossip and bet on the outcome.

All quite sad, I'm sure, to bods on the outside, but immense fun if you're a bod who's "in".





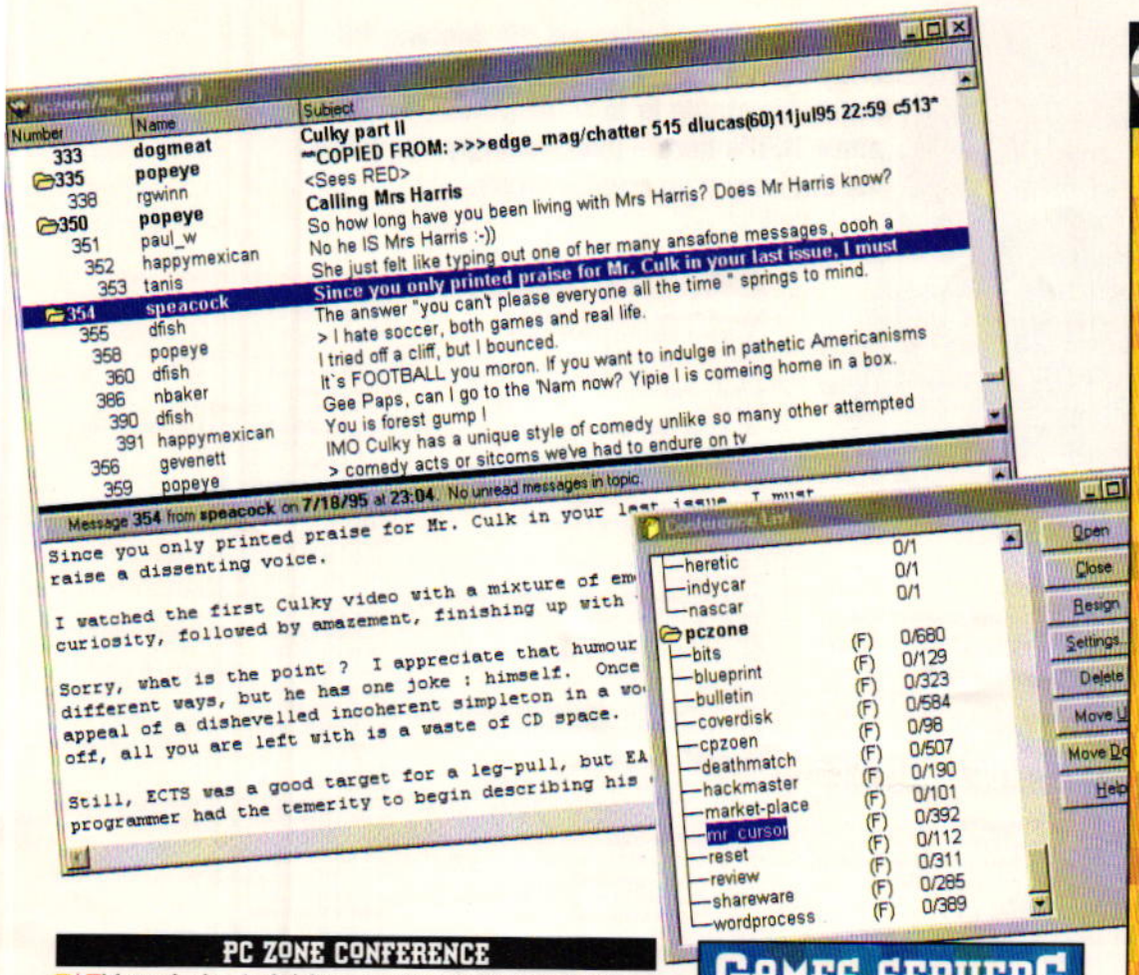


AUCTION

Another interesting twist to CIX is this re-invention of a popular "real-life" pastime. CIX's answer to Sotheby's is an e-mail auction where computer goodies, old CD's, software, and second-hand electronic consumables are put on sale for all and sundry to e-mail their bids.

If you've got something to sell, you simply post its details into the Items forum, along with a reserve price (ie the lowest price you're prepared to accept). Bidders then have 72 hours to out-price each other. The auctioneer takes the best offer after 72 hours. The goods are either collected or posted in the mail (the buyer pays for P&P). It really is a pretty cool idea, you'll freely admit, and the equipment and prices on offer are very reasonable. For instance, in just one week, a Zolitrix 28.8 modem (£75), 16MB RAM (£300), Micro Machines II (£10), a Sony Walkman (£10), and a 486 VL Motherboard (£50) were all sold – and they were just five items out of 250 posted in a week!

It's a bit like *The Multi-coloured SwapShop* but without Noel Edmond's jumpers.



PC ZONE CONFERENCE

Without doubt, the brightest star in the CIX sky is the all-singing, all-dancing, all-witty *PC Zone* forum.

Started six months ago by anonymous benefactor, Popeye, and frequented daily by all the illuminaries of the *PC Zone* team, it gives you a chance to discuss games, *PC Zone*, Colin Culk, and how much Macca beat you by in a deathmatch. There are 13 areas:

BITS For miscellaneous news and chit chat. Current conversations: "Why is *PC Format* so crap?"; "Bugged Games (Why Oh Why?)"; and "*X-Wing* is the best game in the world!", "Oh no it's not!", "Oh yes it is..." etc.

BLUEPRINT When is so-and-so coming out? Main questions: *Star Control III, Command and Conquer, Need For Speed*, and *Champion Ship Manager II*.

BULLETIN Much the same as Bits, really. These things do tend to get a tad blurred.

COVERDISK What's on next month's coverdisk? Why is this month's buggered again? *Ad nauseam*. Also, an unmissable slagging off of a guy who objected to a directory called WOG on our coverdisk (even though it plainly stood for *Wings of Glory*).

CPZOEN Er, a discussion of spelling mistakes in *PC Zone*.

DEATHMATCH For challenging *Zone* peeps to deathmatches and having a go at Macca for being so arrogant.

HACKMASTER Games tips and solutions, direct from the files of the TruePlayers and HackMasters.

MARKET PLACE For selling games or your girlfriend. Also where we post any freebies.

MR CURSOR For obscure *Mr Cursor* type discussions, ie aren't *Spangles* just really great? Isn't Colin Culk great? (Yes! No! YES! NO! etc, etc.)

RESET Technical problems when running games. Snore-based chats about AUTOEXECS, CONFIGS, and *Windows 95*.

REVIEW Agreeing or disagreeing (but mainly agreeing) with *PC Zone*'s reviewers. Also a podium for reviewers to air their views on anything and everything.

SHAREWARE On-line! Shareware! Woo! Yeah!

WORDPROCESSOR Get your musings in *PC Zone*. Complaints about the mag. Bum-licky messages etc. Z

GAMES SERVERS

Gamesnet
01222 362361
Cardiff (9 lines)

Gamesnet
0171 460 0515
London (16 lines)

The Games BBS
0181 561 3242
London (12 lines)

The Forest
01425 629629
Hampshire (12 lines)

Although you can connect with normal comms software (8-N-1) you'll need a program called SIRDOOM.ZIP to play *Doom* multi-player. You can download it, or, more sensibly, simply install it from this month's coverdisk.

Special Offer

Yep, we've got together with those handsome ragamuffins at CIX Towers to offer you (as one of *PC Zone*'s readers) a special Join-CIX-On-The-Cheap special offer experience.

Normally when you join CIX you have to pay a £25 registration fee and go through the rigmarole of obtaining the shareware version of Ameol. Not so, we say. CIX have generously waived the £25 fee for joining and we've stuffed Ameol (both 16-bit and 32-bit *Window 95* ready versions) on this month's cover CD. Fab McFab. So, you're ready to flush your Internet connection down the toilet and get sussed with the excellent, all-British CIX carnival of comms.

And there's no laborious phoning or waiting 28 days rubbish. You can log on NOW. Here's how:

1 Install Ameol from the ONLINE directory of the CDROM onto your computer.

NB If you're running *Windows 95*, install in the faster, sleeker Ameol32. (If, however, you are still stuck in *Windows 3.1*, then you are probably better off with Amoel16.)

2 Using standard COMMS software set to 8-N-1, dial the CIX number (0181 296 1255). At the log-in prompt, type: CIX. Then type: "new". This will create a new account.

3 After supplying your name and credit card details, you'll be asked if you have a special registration code. Type: "YES". Then enter "PCZONE" as your code, with no spaces.

4 That's it.

5 Alternatively, if you don't have a credit card, you can phone CIX's Admin department on 01492 641961 and ask for a "Direct Debit Application Form". When you return it, make sure you clearly mark it with "PCZONE" to get your £25 discount.

CIX on-line charges are ultra-cheap for two reasons. Firstly, it's only 4p per minute off-peak, 6.5p on-peak, plus the price of the phone call. And secondly, because you're using an OLR, your connect times are ultra-minimal (*PC Zone*'s average daily connect time is 50 seconds!) and even less if you use a 28800 connection.

The minimum charge per month is £6.25 (ie you pay that even if you don't spend that much in connection charges), but most users rarely go over that.

If you need more information then you can call the CIX helpline on: 0181 296 9666 during office hours.

BUYERS' GUIDE

Welcome to the all-singing, all-dancing *PC Zone* Buyers Guide, which is to gaming what the BR timetable is to trainspotters. You name it, it's here – painstakingly compiled by our very own engine driver.

Issue 4 – July 1993

Boston Bomb Club
(70) Simarils – Puzzle £9.99
Fairly basic but fairly addictive puzzler.

Cohort II
(30) Impressions – Strategy £34.99
All the fun and entertainment of a barium meal.

Eye of the Beholder III: Legend Of Myth Drannor
(64) SSI – Role-Playing Game £39.99
Has none of the feel or atmosphere of its prequels. Strictly for the yellow-fingernailed brigade only, I'm afraid.

Freddy Pharkas Frontier Pharmacist
(85: Recommended) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £39.99
An utterly absorbing, entertaining and difficult point 'n' click adventure with some incredibly naff in-jokes.

Maelstrom
(70) Empire – Strategy £39.99
You've read the review – you decide.

Nippon Safes Inc
(66) Global Software – Adventure £34.99
Great plot, nice artwork, decent price but nothing out of the ordinary.

Populous And The Promised Lands
(85: Recommended) Hit Squad – Strategy £14.99
One of the greatest games ever written – buy it!

SimLife For Windows
(69) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Strategy £35.99
If you liked *SimEarth*... Fun, but not lasting fun.

Space Hulk
(90: Classic) Electronic Arts – Strategy £44.99
Death, destruction, blood, gore, tension, fear, and a damn good game as well.

Starblade
(22) Simarils – Space combat/Trading £9.99
It crashes a lot, but why care?

Strike Fleet
(75) Hit Squad – Wargame £14.99
A worthwhile addition to naval sims.

Super Ski II
(20) Microids – Sport £9.99
Sad, speccy ski game.

The 7th Guest
(60) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £44.99 (CD)
Technologically okay, but disappointingly weak on gameplay.

Tom Landry Strategic Football
(75) Merit Software – Sport £44.99
A very good, strategic, American football sim that could do with more player involvement.

V For Victory 3 – Market Garden
(82: Recommended) Three-Sixty Pacific – Wargame £34.99
Why bother with boards, hexes and counters when you've got games like this?

Where In Space Is Carmen Sandiego?
(85: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Edutainment £39.99 Educational, fun and highly recommended.

Issue 5 – August 1993

10 Intelligent Strategy Games
(60) Oxford Softworks – Compendium £34.99
Good sampler and cheap if you need them all.

688 Attack Sub
(78) Hit Squad – Submarine Simulation £14.99
Sub-standard? Definitely not!

Air Bucks v1.2
(49) Impressions – Strategy £34.99
A potentially interesting variation on a theme, which fails largely due to being more than a tad unexciting.

Betrayal At Krondor
(91: Classic) Dynamix – Role-Playing Game £44.99
The licence makes a lot of difference – great story, great game.

Championship Manager '93
(75) Domark – Sport £29.99
An undoubtedly "serious" management game that's involving, but occasionally unnecessarily slow.

Chess Maniac 5 Billion & 1
(60) Spectrum Holobyte – Chess £44.99
Falls between two stools – and I'm being very nice here.

Dizzy Collection
(60) Codemasters – Compilation £35.99
Contains: *Fast Food Dizzy, Fantasy World Dizzy, Kwik Snack, Dizzy Prince Of Yolkfolk, Magicland Dizzy.*
A poor egg-scuse to make totally unfunny egg yolks. Just about playable.

Ishar 2: Messengers Of Doom
(50) Simarils – Role-Playing Game £32.99,
Would have been a real contender if it had been released a year or two earlier.

James Pond 2: Codename Robocod
(87: Recommended) Millennium – Platform Game £30.99 – Only available in a compilation
"Nifty scrolling, great gameplay" is our first remark on playing Robocod, closely followed by "Has anyone got a pair of sunglasses?"

Premier Manager
(59) Gremlin Graphics – Sport £29.99
Not recommended as a full-priced game – it would make a good, fun budget game.

Prince Of Persia 2: The Shadow And The Flame
(89: Recommended) Brøderbund – Platform Game £39.99
We reckon they could have done more with it, but it's a corker nevertheless.

Protostar
(80: Recommended) Tsunami – Space Combat/Trading £39.99
A slick game that's full of nice touches and good ideas, but if you're not patient, don't bother.

Syndicate
(90: Classic) Electronic Arts – Strategy £44.99
Incredibly violent, completely amoral and brilliant fun.

The Cycles
(55) Hit Squad – Sport £12.99
Sadly, an overpriced and underpowered ride into the past.

War In The Gulf
(81: Recommended) Empire – Wargame £34.99
Another great set of blood-thirsty missions for one of the most playable 3D battle sims ever.

Worlds Of Legend
(73) Mindscape – Role-Playing Game £25.99
Perfectly reasonable but rather old-fashioned fantasy RPG jobbie.

WWF Wrestlemania
(58) Hit Squad – Sport £9.99
Fairly limited beat 'em up, which was delivered much better on the console.

Issue 6 – September 1993

Blade Of Destiny: Realms Of Arkania
(78) US Gold – Role-Playing Game £39.99
Large in scale, absorbing to play – but more suited to "serious" role-players than your average gamer.

Blue Force
(35) Tsunami – Adventure £39.99
Tiresome controls and sloppy design mar what could have been a decidedly average adventure.

Caesar's Palace For Windows
(65) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Casino Compendium £35.99
A good compilation; unnervingly addictive.

Fields Of Glory
(89: Recommended) MicroProse – Wargame £44.99
A brilliant sim that puts even the most reluctant wargamer right into the thick of it. Only its speed prevents it from being awarded Classic status.

Flashback
(89: Recommended) US Gold – Platform Game £37.99
It's *Prince Of Persia* in the future (but this time he's got a gun).

Lotus – The Ultimate Challenge
(68) Gremlin Graphics – Driving Game £34.99
Nothing particularly new, but good fun, especially in two player mode.

Maniac Mansion 2: Day Of The Tentacle
(85: Recommended) LucasArts – Adventure £42.99
Lovely graphics, good music, quite challenging but a bit too American for my roast beef and dumplings taste buds.

MiG-29: Fulcrum
(70) Domark – Flight Sim £14.99
Almost no scenery, but a nice flight model.

Monopoly
(75) Supervision – Board Game £34.99
A faithful conversion, which is slightly too flashy for its own good.

Napoleonics
(79) On-Line Entertainment – Wargame Compendium – Deleted £34.99
Three excellent and original Napoleonic wargames for tactical experts.

Open Golf
(50) Ocean – Sport – Deleted
A disappointing foray into the world of golf sims from Ocean.

Pinball Dreams
(78) 21st Century Entertainment – Pinball Simulation £37.99
As enjoyable as the real thing, but a bit on the pricey side.

Prehistorik 2
(50) Titus – Platform Game £7.99
A very average platform game, which competes with some budget titles but little else.

Rags To Riches
(60) Interplay – Strategy £39.99
Lacks excitement; unlikely to have a long life.

Return Of The Phantom
(73) MicroProse – Adventure £44.99
Delightfully atmospheric and aimed at beginners, but a tad too short and easy to justify the price.

Sensible Soccer
(70) Renegade – Sport £34.99
The best football game around for the PC, but still not as good as it should've been.

Space Legends
(75) Empire – Compilation £34.99
You'll like at least two out of three.

The Immortal
(70) Hit Squad – Role-Playing Game £14.99
At least four Sunday afternoons' play we reckon.

Tornado
(93: Classic) Digital Integration – Flight Sim £44.99
The more you play, the deeper it gets – eventually you'll need a bathyscape. Not for beginners.

Issue 7 – October 1993

Ambush At Sorinor
(70) Empire – Strategy £39.99
Short, sharp missions, and plenty of them, make this an interesting strategy game.

Archer Maclean's Pool (256 colour version)
(88: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Sport £30.99
Exactly what it claims to be – the same game with more colours. Score assumes you don't have the original.

Caesar Deluxe
(70) Impressions – Strategy £34.99
More user-friendly than its predecessor but the game remains the same.

Clash Of Steel
(67) SSI – Wargame £39.99
Intricate and well presented wargame with plenty of appeal for the dedicated wargamer.

Day Of The Tentacle (CD)
(87: Recommended) LucasArts – Adventure £45.99
A very taxing, very American adventure, with some of the best animation ever.

Dune (CD)
(82: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £44.99
A shining example of a good game made into a great game for CD.

Eric The Unready (CD)
(77) Accolade – Adventure £34.99
Hilarious, but the creaky interface isn't so funny.

F-15 Strike Eagle II
(85: Recommended) Kixx – Flight Sim £16.99
It still holds its own in a dogfight.

Flames Of Freedom
(70) Kixx – Strategy/Arcade £9.99
A bit old, a bit saggy, but will still give purists much fun.

Galactic Warrior Rats
(75) Alternative Software – Arcade £9.99
Totally simple, totally basic, but quite good fun nevertheless.

Gunboat
(54) Hit Squad – Submarine Simulation £14.99
A better idea than game.

Hardball
(20) Hit Squad – Sport £12.99
Interesting only as an example of how bad baseball games used to be.

Imperial Pursuit
(80: Recommended) LucasArts – Space Sim £19.99
Long, involving "story-driven" tour of duty, perfect for Skywalker-wannabes.

King's Quest VI (CD)
(90: Classic) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £49.99
Excellent use of a CD, despite the "soft" story.

Lands Of Lore
(90: Classic) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Role-Playing Game £35.99
A tasty and involving reminder of what *Eye Of The Beholder III* could have been.

Legend Of Kyrandia (CD)
(82: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £44.99
Stunning to look at, but not really challenging enough if you're the type who has played a lot of adventures before.

LHX Attack Chopper
(88: Recommended) Hit Squad – Flight Sim £14.99
Still one of the classic flight sims.

Loom
(72) Kixx – Adventure £14.99
Simple and enchanting adventure; an ideal game for beginners.

Mean 18"
(60) Hit Squad – Sport £9.99
Reasonable mid-table golf game.

MiG-29
(75) MicroProse – Flight Sim £19.99
An excellent add-on for *Falcon 3.0* fans, but nothing groundbreaking in flight sim terms.

NHL Hockey
(91: Classic) Electronic Arts – Sport £44.99
A great version of a brilliant game.

Pirates Gold!
(75) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
As good as the original. Unfortunately, it almost is the original.

Railroad Tycoon Deluxe
(72) MicroProse – Strategy £39.99
Not significantly better than the original, but if you haven't got that then add 20% to the score.

Ringworld (CD)
(82: Recommended) Tsunami – Adventure £39.99
An alternative to having it on disk; nothing



(Left) *X-Wing:* groove on down to the old "destroy the Death Star, save the croissant-haired princess" tune.

more!

Rules Of Engagement 2
(91: Classic) Impressions – Strategy £44.99
A game of great depth and complexity.

Seal Team
(77) Electronic Arts – Shoot 'Em Up/Strategy £44.99
In storyboard form I imagine it looked fabulous. In transition to code, however, it feels like something has gone astray.

Simon The Sorcerer
(86: Recommended) Adventuresoft UK Ltd – Adventure £39.99
At last an Anglo answer to the average American adventure. Recommended.

The Lost Vikings
(80: Recommended) Interplay – Arcade £34.99
An excellent puzzle/platform/arcade game (categorise it yourself, we can't be bothered).

The Patrician
(65) Daze Marketing – Trading Sim £34.99
Desperate for a trading game set in the Hanseatic League but which could have been given more zap? Look no further.

Wing Commander Academy
(60) Origin – Flight Sim £19.99
This is only really worth it for *Wing Commander* combat addicts.

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Battle Chess
(45) Interplay – Chess £44.99
Stalemate for the *Battlechess* series.

Blue Force (CD)
(40) Tsunami – Adventure £39.99
A criminal waste of a CD.

Conquered Kingdoms
(71) Mirage – Wargame £44.99
The rather second rate packaging and laughable manual conceals a highly playable, fantasy wargame.

Cover Girl Strip Poker
(40) On-Line Entertainment – Card Game £34.99
An appallingly bad poker game; a weak excuse for some dirty pics.

Flight Simulator 5.0
(90: Classic) Microsoft – Flight Sim £35.00
The definitive flying simulation, but not the definitive flying "game".

Gear Works
(62) The Software Business – Puzzle Game £19.99
Not good enough for the price and not cheap enough for what it is.

Grand Prix Circuit
(50) Hit Squad – Driving £12.99
Playable but crap for the price.

Hard Drivin' 2
(30) Hit Squad – Driving £12.99
Unplayable and crap for the price.

Homeworld: Gateway II
(75) Accolade – Adventure £39.99
Long, hard trek through pretty unatmospheric space.

Lord Of The Rings
(70) Interplay – Role-Playing Game £44.99
New and improved role-playing Tolkien jaunt for patient fantasy fans only.

Lost In Time
(69) Coktel Vision – Adventure £44.99
Tough, good looking adventure that comes a cropper at the end.

Motor Stars
(75) Revell – Racing £59.99
Sex on CD for kit-heads but coffee mat for every-
one else.

Patriot
(45) Three-Sixty Pacific – Wargame £44.95
A revolutionary but seriously flawed approach to land-based wargaming.

Shadowlands
(65) Hit Squad – Role-Playing Game £12.99
One for the RPG addicts.

Solitaire's Journey
(87) Mirage – Puzzle £44.99
The closest that solitaire fans will get to Heaven on Earth.

Stronghold
(80: Recommended) SSI – Strategy £35.99
Extremely addictive even if you'd normally steer clear of D&D™.

Super Space Invaders
(75) Hit Squad – Arcade £9.99
Here's a blast from the past for less than a round of drinks.

T2
(80: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Arcade £29.99
Mindless, chaotic and highly addictive.

The Silver Seed (Ultima VII Add-On Disk)
(50) Origin – Role-Playing Game £19.99
An utterly pointless addition to a brilliant game. One can only turn to Origin and ask "Why?"

Troddlers
(79) SCI – Puzzle Game £29.99
Not at all bad, but it smacks too much of other games to achieve classic status.

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Blue Angels
(30) Hit Squad – Flight Sim £12.99
Interesting, but hardly spectacular.

Brutal Football
(65) Millennium – Sport £29.99
Too much violence, not enough game.

Chuck Yeager's Air Combat
(85: Recommended) Hit Squad – Flight Sim £14.99
Living proof that pensioners still have what it takes.

Clix
(62) The Genesis Arcade – Puzzle Game £14.99
Nice idea, shame about the gameplay.

Cogito
(57) Mindscape – Puzzle Game £29.99
A reasonably entertaining and challenging puzzle game, but only for the patient.

Dark Sun: Shattered Lands
(83: Recommended) SSI – Role-Playing Game £45.99
The next best thing to an *Ultima*.

Dino Dini's Goal
(60) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Sport £35.99,
Kick Off with sideways options (but it works). Not as good as *Sensible Soccer*.

Dracula
(65) Psygnosis – Arcade £39.99
A good, challenging game, but the execution should have been better.

Frontier: Elite II
(95: Classic) Gametek – Space Trading Sim £39.99
Without doubt an unrivalled classic; nothing else even comes close.

Front Page Sports Football Pro
(85: Recommended) Dynamix – Sport £39.99
The best around, but you'll definitely need a high-spec machine.

Gobliiins
(50) Coktel Vision – Puzzle – £39.99
An unimproved CD version of an original but inspired game.

Hook
(35) Hit Squad – Adventure £12.99
At last we have perhaps the most faithful film conversion around. The movie was a turkey, so is the game.

Jack The Ripper
(39) Mirage – Adventure £44.99
Ugly, unpleasant and boring. I know, give it a job with *PC Zone*.

Jutland
(72) On-Line Entertainment – Strategy £59.99
Good but sadly there are too many unnecessary gimmicks.

Kasparov's Gambit
(85: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Chess £44.99
Excellent chess game with attitude and personality.

Magic Candle II
(80: Recommended) Hit Squad – Role-Playing Game £14.99
Good as an RPG, excellent as a budget.

NFL Coaches Club Football
(70) MicroProse – Sport £44.99
Certainly a good attempt but it's a shame that it's badly let down by the rather poor passing system.

Privateer
(75) Origin – Flight Sim £49.99
Wing Commander fans will love this. *X-Wing* fans won't. It's as simple as that.

Sim Farm
(79) Maxis – Strategy £34.99
Quite good if you like farming, but not as good as *Sim City*.

Steel Thunder
(60) Hit Squad – Arcade £12.99
Reasonable fun, but not one you'd come back to.

Street Fighter II
(81: Recommended) US Gold – Beat 'Em Up – £29.99
Addictive and violent but the cross over to the PC hindered unless you invest in a game pad.

Strike Commander: Tactical Operations
(80: Recommended) Origin – Flight Sim £19.99
Essential if you're determined to get the most out of *Strike Commander*.

V for Victory 4: Gold–Juno–Sword
(78) Three-Sixty Pacific £34.99
It's still the best computer wargames system but it needs a shot in the arm... or leg... or both even.

When Two Worlds War
(63) Impressions – Wargame £34.99
An unattractive attempt at a strategy wargame that fails to add anything new – including excitement. Give us dice and counters any day...

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8 Ball Deluxe
(75) Supervision – Pinball Game £34.99
Technically, the best pinball game there is, but there's not enough of it for the price.

20th Century Alamanac
(30) The Software Business – General Interest £74.99
Outrageous price for a poor substitute for a hardback encyclopaedia.

Aces Over Europe
(78) Dynamix – Flight Sim £44.99
It's better than *Aces Of The Pacific*, but so it should be. Dated, but still very playable.

Air Combat Classics
(60) US Gold – Flight Sim £45.99
Shows just how far things have progressed in five years.

Alien Breed
(75) Team 17 – Shoot 'Em Up £29.99
Enjoyable, undemanding shoot 'em up that comes into its own in two-player mode.

Dracula Unleashed
(85: Recommended) Mindscape – Adventure £39.99
Classy adventure that you can really get your teeth into.

Dreamlands
(72) Daze Marketing – Compendium £29.99
The ideas and graphics are interesting, the gameplay, however, isn't.

Goblins 2
(67) Coktel Vision – Puzzle Game £44.99
Zany puzzle game, frustrating at times but mostly good fun.

IndyCar Racing
(93: Classic) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Driving £44.99
The new definitive driving game. And it comes with a free moustache.

Innocent Until Caught
(84: Recommended) Psygnosis – Adventure £44.99
Well worth nicking. Ho ho.

Jurassic Park
(73) Ocean – Adventure £34.99
Despite some irritating flaws, an atmospheric and addictive game.

Knights Of The Sky
(79) Kixx – Strategy £16.99
A game that's well worth buying for the two-player option alone.

Links Championship Course: Innisbrook
(75) US Gold – Sport £24.99
If you really want another *Links* course, then this is one.

Links
(80: Recommended) Kixx – Sport £16.99,
An excellent golf game for anyone with a less than ninja PC.

Lords Of Power
(85: Recommended) Ubisoft – Strategy £39.99
A first class simulation which you would be mad not to buy.

Network Q RAC Rally 2
(80: Recommended) Europress Software – Driving £34.99
A rather good addition to the current crop of driving games, if you can stand the opponent's amazing skills.

Newsweek Interactive
(30) The Software Business – General Interest £39.99
Over-priced, over-patronising and over here.

Night Shift
(70) Kixx – £12.99
A suitably frantic and frustrating puzzler.

Oceans Below
(70) The Software Business – Edutainment £39.99
Initially interesting, but unfortunately the novelty all too soon wears off. Strictly for scuba diving fans.

Protostar (CD)
(80: Recommended) Accolade – Space Sim £39.99
Absorbing, well designed and, if you can forgive its weaker moments, it'll keep you busy for ages.

Return To Zork (CD)
(90: Classic) Activision – Adventure £49.99
Bad news for text-adventure purists who thought that *Zork* was sacred. Ha!

Return To Zork
(90: Classic) Activision – Adventure £45.99
A highly imaginative and enjoyable adventure game with some very clever knobs attached.

Shadowcaster
(66) Electronic Arts – Role-Playing Game £44.99
Neither *Wolfenstein* nor *Underworld*. And not much in-between.

Speed Racer
(49) Accolade – Racing £39.99
Nice intro, shame about the game.

Star Trek: Judgement Rites
(79) Interplay – Adventure £44.99
The stories are poetic and the variety of gameplay is "fascinating" but it is not the best flight sim or adventure game.

Strike Squad
(25) Empire – Strategy £39.99
Just turn the page and get on with enjoying life, okay?

The Blue And The Gray
(78) Impressions – Wargame £39.99
Dedicated blood 'n' guts fans will find it a little simplistic, but it's a great all-round wargame with hidden depths and long term playability.

The Even More Incredible Machine
(89: Recommended) Dynamix 39.99
If you've never played *The Incredible Machine* now's the time to start. So what are you waiting for?!

World Class Rugby
(60) Audiogenic – Sport £14.99
Not really worth the waggle.

World War Two: Battles Of The South Pacific
(62) Mirage – Strategy/Action £44.99
Innovative mix of naval strategy and action. The gameplay doesn't quite live up to expectations –

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Advantage Tennis
(55) Infogrames – Sport £35.99
Unexciting tennis game that lacks punch.

Alone In The Dark 2
(97: Classic) Infogrames – Adventure – £39.99
Absolutely Brilliant! What the PC was made for.

Alone In the Dark (CD)
(92: Classic) Infogrames – Adventure £44.99
Still the best thing since sliced bread. Buy it.

B-Wing
(72) US Gold – Space Sim £19.99
Your sister either fancied Han Solo or Luke Skywalker. You'll either fancy B-Wing or, er, something else.

Capitol Hill (CD)
(75) Software Toolworks – Edutainment £39.99
Comprehensive introduction to American politics

Chessmaster 4000 Turbo
(90: Classic) Mindscape – Chess £34.99
Tough opponent: gentle teacher.

Critical Path (CD)
(72) Media Vision – Adventure £49.99
Slick and atmospheric but way too short.

Dungeon Hack
(62) SSI – Role-Playing Game £39.99
Not enough there. Not enough design options. Not enough gameplay. Very hardened and grizzled role-players only.

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(Left) *Simon The Sorcerer:* at last, an adventure game with a sense of humour – albeit a bit Pratchett-esque.

Fire And Ice
(75) Renegade – Platform Game £29.99
A fun, but difficult game, marred only by an over-inflated price and ridiculous copy protection.
Flight Sim Toolkit
(80: Recommended) Domark – Simulation £49.99
Recommended, but only if you find *Stunt Island* limiting. It can be very heavy going.
Global Dominaton
(65) Impressions – Strategy £39.99
Slick, addictive strategy game but it presents no long term challenge.
Goblins 3
(75) Coktel Vision – Puzzle Game £39.99
Good for beginners and a pleasant diversion for seasoned adventurers.
Kingmaker
(88: Recommended) US Gold – Board Game £37.99
Without doubt the best board game conversion for a long, long time.
Magic Boy
(60) Empire – Platform Game £25.99
Not very "magic" at all.
Master of Orion
(72) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
A good one for all the accountants out there.
Rebel Assault
(93: Classic) LucasArts – Shoot 'Em Up £49.99
It's *Star Wars*. It's also the most important game
to date.
Striker
(55) Elite – Sport £29.99
Another Paul Bodin penalty of the gamesplaying world.
Subwar 2050
(88: Recommended) MicroProse – Simulation £44.99
Easily the best "fun" simulation that MicroProse has produced.
The Labyrinth Of Time
(89: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Adventure £39.99
Beautiful, alluring, a touch slow and a little fussy. A quite superb adventure though.
The Terminator Rampage
(75) Bethesda Softworks – Arcade £39.99
Okay, but once you've seen *Doom*, you'll laugh in *Rampage*'s face and spill its pint.
VGA Planets
(70) PAW PBM – Role-Playing Game £24.99
A rather interesting type of role-playing game that takes some time, but is generally worth the wait.

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Campaign
(52) Empire – Strategy £39.99
Dim-witted attempt at simulating armoured action – too buggy to recommend, despite colourful graphics and arcade sequences.
Championship Manager '94
(80: Recommended) Domark – Sport £29.99
It's still the best (just).
Championship Manager Italia
(80: Recommended) Domark – Sport £29.99
It's the best too, just with a few more noughts at the end of the transfer figures.
Combat Classics 2
(50) Empire – Flight Sim Compendium £34.99
Sadly, this compilation contains one classic and two rather second -rate duds.
Companions Of Xanth
(73) Accolade – Adventure £39.99
Awful puns. Questionable humour. Very *Monkey Island*-esque. What more could you want from an adventure?
Cyber Race
(64) Cyberdreams – Racing £44.99
Mildly entertaining for a quick blast, but that's about it.
Fury Of The Furries
(85: Recommended) Mindscape – Puzzle/Platform Game £39.99
A riveting platform puzzler, but not for the easily frustrated.
Gabriel Knight
(92: Classic) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £39.99
Brilliant and frightening offering from Sierra.
Genesia
(83: Recommended) Mindscape – Strategy £34.99
A little bit of *Populous*, a little bit of *Civilisation*.
Hand Of Fate
(82: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment Adventure £39.99
You've got to hand it to Westwood, this is a bit of a stunner.
Heirs To The Throne
(43) Mirage – Strategy £44.99
If I got this kind of quality from a PD game I'd blinking well complain.
Indianapolis 500
(65) Hit Squad – Driving £14.99
A once-great giant succumbs to the ravages of time.
Leisure Suit Larry 6
(75) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £35.99
The best *Larry* yet; but he's getting way past his sell-by date.
Litil Divil
(90: Classic) Gremlin Graphics – Puzzle Game £39.99
An excellent puzzle game with wit and flair.
Police Quest 4: Open Season
(78) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £39.99
A thoroughly professional job for those who can think and click at the same time.
Premier Challenge
(78) T'ai Chi – Sport £24.99
Design your own game. Boost this score.
Premier Manager 2
(65) Gremlin Graphics – Sport £34.99
It's better, but still too obsessed with interior decorating for my liking.
Shadow Of Darkness
(80: Recommended) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £39.99
A compelling storyline, but dull battle scenes.
The Incredible Toons
(82: Recommended) Dynamix – Puzzle Game £39.99
Zany, silly and highly addictive.

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Archon Ultra
(78) US Gold – Strategy £39.99
More beat 'em up than strategy.
Beneath A Steel Sky
(83: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Flight Sim £39.99
Graphically good and pleasingly puzzling jaunt that you'll feel like returning to.
Conspiracy
(67) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £44.99
Takes all the fun out of Ruskie bashing.
D-Day
(38) US Gold – Wargame £35.99
D-Day lies bleeding in the no man's land of wargames.
Daemonsgate
(45) Gametek – Role-Playing Game £29.99
Out-dated, tedious and visually vestigial.
Doom
(96: Classic) iD Software – Arcade £34.99
The best arcade game and the best multi-player game ever. *Doom* is the best.
Hired Guns
(77) Psygnosis – Role-Playing Game £44.99
Ishar 2 with robots.
Hot Sound And Vision
(85: Recommended) Interplay – General Interest £44.99
An outstanding collection.
Interplay's 10 Year Anthology
(85: Recommended) Interplay – Compendium £49.99
A cost-effective way to build an instant library of classic games.
Micro Machines
(70) Codemasters – Arcade £29.99
A good two-player game (if you have a decent PC).
Mortal Kombat
(80: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Beat 'Em Up £29.99
Not as good as the SNES *Street Fighter II*, but the best on the PC.
Nomad
(78) Gametek – Space Strategy £29.99
Good game if you're more into exploring than fighting.
Pinball Fantasies
(80: Recommended) 21st Century Entertainment – Pinball Game £37.95
The meanest machine of them all and a worthy successor to the original *Pinball Dreams*.
Reunion
(80: Recommended) Grandslam – Strategy £TBA
Reunion has something for everyone.
Sim City 2000
(92: Classic) Maxis – Strategy £39.99
Brilliant game that'll make you anally retentive in the extreme.
Star Trek: 25th Anniversary
(86: Recommended) Interplay – Adventure £49.99
A game boldly going where it's been before, just a little more vocally.
Strike Commander (CD)
(86: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £49.99
Superior flight sim, but you need the hardware to match.
The Complete UMS
(58) Mirage – Strategy £44.99
Both classics in their day, the two *UMS* games are a bit too long in the tooth to excite anyone but the real enthusiast.
The Lawnmower Man
(77) Sales Curve Interactive – Arcade £54.99
Excellently presented. Just a little more complexity in the gameplay and it would have been unreservedly recommended.
Winter Olympics
(64) US Gold – Sport £42.99
Has its moments, but you'll probably play it for a few hours and thereafter pick it up once a year if you get really bored.
Wizard
(73) Psygnosis – Role-Playing Game £44.99
A good stepping stone into the land of RPGs.

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Air Transport Pilot (CD)
(70) RC Simulations – Simulation £79.95
Not my idea of fun but a reasonable effort for a simulation of this type.
Airlines
(20) Kompart (UK) Ltd – Strategy £39.99
Ugly, fiddly and totally boring.
Arena: The Elder Scrolls
(62) Bethesda Softworks – Role-Playing Game £45.99
Disappointing really.
Award Winner Gold Edition
(88: Recommended) Empire – Arcade £34.99
Superb quality games with unrivalled value for money. Buy it now!
Battle Isle 2
(91: Classic) Blue Byte – Strategy £54.99
Without a shadow of a doubt, the strategy game of the year.
Buzz Aldrin's Race Into Space (CD)
(95: Classic) Interplay – Strategy – £39.99
A stunning improvement of an already classic game.
Cannon Fodder
(90: Classic) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Arcade/ Strategy £34.99
Great fun for all the wrong and right reasons.
CD-ROM Challenge Pack
(75) Software Toolworks – Compendium £39.99
Reasonable good compilation, but there are better ones around.
Championship Manager For Windows
(79) Domark – Sport £29.99
A wasted opportunity. Not as good as the DOS version.
D/Generation
(85: Recommended) Mindscape – Adventure £19.99
Probably the best game that Windows users have ever played.
Excellent Games
(85: Recommended) Beau Jolly – Various £39.99
Great games at a great price. A compilation not to be missed, including *Populous 2*, *Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker*, *Car And Driver* and *Robocod*.
Fantastic Dizzy
(50) Codemasters – Platform Game £9.99
Wrong time. Wrong format. Wrong price.
Gabriel Knight (CD)
(90: Classic)
Sierra On-Line – Adventure £44.99
Brooding, atmospheric thriller.
In Extremis
(67) US Gold – Arcade £37.99
You'll shriek! You'll shout! You'll yawn!
Johnny Quest
(12) Software Business – Arcade/Adventure £29.99
Can basically be summed up in one word. Dreadful.
Megarace
(65) Mindscape – Racing £39.99
A superb demonstration of what can be done graphically with CD-ROM... and how easy it is for gameplay to suffer as a result.
Merchant Prince
(82: Recommended) Mirage – Strategy £44.99
Don't let the dodgy graphics fool you. If you give this game half a chance you'll be hooked.
Microcosm
(70) Psygnosis – Shoot 'Em Up £49.99
Brilliant graphics and excellent sound. Let down by limited gameplay.
NFL Pro League Football
(50) Digital Integration – Sport £39.99
As a play-editor it's okay, but playing the game itself is disappointing.
Privateer: Righteous Fire
(80: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Add-On £19.99
Privateer fans definitely won't be disappointed with this one.
Seawolf
(83: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Simulation £44.99
A highly atmospheric sub sim with a control interface from hell.
Starlord
(70) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
It could have been excellent. Could have been. Damn!
The Patrician (CD)
(70) Daze Marketing – Strategy £39.99
A good game on disk, slightly better on CD.
The Red Crystal
(43) Mirage – Role-Playing Game £44.99
Don't ask your friends to play this if you want to keep them.
Unnecessary Roughness
(66) Accolade – Sport £39.99
Best described as "alright". It's as good as most American footy sims.

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Bloodnet
(75) MicroProse – Role-Playing Game £39.99
Hindered by outdated implementation, but still well worth a look.
Carriers At War II
(63) Electronic Arts – Strategy £44.99
For die-hard strategy aficionados.
Darkseed
(90: Classic) Cyberdreams – Adventure £44.99
If you have a taste for the macabre, you'll never forget the *Darkseed* affair.
Diggers
(40) Millennium – Puzzle Game £34.99
Mind-numbingly tedious.
Disney Animation Studio
(75) Infogrames – General Interest £99.99
More serious approach with superb sample animations that you can't use!
Dragonsphere
(69) MicroProse – Adventure £39.99
A beautiful adventure game that won't tax your brain too heavily.
Evasive Action
(40) Mindscape – Simulation £34.99
So close, but more bugs than Watergate.
F1
(40) Domark – Sport £29.99
The champions of sport produce yet another world-beater.
Fleet Defender
(86: Recommended) MicroProse – Flight Sim £44.99
Heavyweight flight sim, both helped and hindered by over-clever graphics.
Hanna-Barbera Animation Workshop
(75) Empire – General Interest £49.99
Tries to make everything fun and encourages you to try out other methods of animation.
Hornet Naval Strike Fighter
(80: Recommended) Spectrum Holobyte – Flight Sim £TBA
As that well known saying goes: "If you like

(Right) *IndyCar Racing:* great graphics and playability make this the best ever driving game.

(Far right) *Sam & Max:* The clue's inside the cat. Rip its head off! (Sick, or what?)





Falcon 3, you'll just love *Hornet*".

Myst
(67) Electronic Arts – Adventure £44.99
Surreal and atmospheric, if not realistic.

Pacific Strike
(80: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £49.99
Miles better than *Strike Commander* but requires a state-of-the-art, ninja PC.

Pagan: Ultima VII
(78) Electronic Arts – Role-Playing Game £44.99
Without doubt a love/hate relationship for *Ultima* purists.

Ravenloft
(78) US Gold – Role-Playing Game £45.99
SSI has finally got "real" and produced a playable and accessible RPG.

Red Hell
(60) Cyberdreams – Adventure £39.99
The graphics are poor and the control system is dire. Avoid it.

RedShift
(95: Classic) Maris Multimedia Ltd – General Interest £89.00
A stunning program which will be hard to beat.

Sabre Team
(60) Krisalis – Strategy £29.99
This has all been done before, and done much better as well.

Shadowcaster
(70) Electronic Arts – Role-Playing Game £39.99
Considerable enhancements for CD but the gameplay remains the same.

Spaceship Warlock
(70) Reactor/Ubisoft – Adventure £44.99
Very slick, very polished. The gameplay's a bit limited but it's fun all the same.

TFX
(80: Recommended) Ocean – Simulation £44.99
Great game with totally superfluous bells and whistles.

UFO Enemy Unknown
(93: Classic) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
Brilliantly designed, perfectly implemented and totally absorbing.

Washington DC Scenery
(85: Recommended) Supervision – Flight Sim Add-On £39.99
One of the best flight sim add-ons to date.

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Castles II
(65) Interplay – Strategy £49.95
Interplay usually releases excellent games – this isn't one of them.

Comanche (CD)
(90: Classic) Optima – Flight Sim £49.99
Brilliant action-packed helicopter simulation at a great price on CD.

Companions Of Xanth (CD)
(84: Recommended) Accolade – Role-Playing Game £39.99
Great game on disk. Even better on CD.

Corridor 7
(55) Gametek – Arcade £19.99
Nothing new or exciting.

Detroit
(85: Recommended) Impressions – Strategy £39.99
An intriguing strategy/sim which boasts both originality and playability.

Dragon's Lair
(67) Elite Systems – Adventure £39.99
An interactive cartoon that's more "cartoon" than "interactive".

Eye Of The storm
(40) Rebellion – Space/Strategy £39.99
Very futuristic, very *Elite* and very, very crap.

Great Naval Battles 2
(86: Recommended) US Gold – Simulation £45.99
SSI cruises easily to the head of the fleet with this simply stunning sim.

Hand Of Fate (CD)
(78) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £49.99
Good game, shame about the conversion. In this case, more equals less.

Jack Nicklaus Signature Edition
(85: Recommended) Accolade – Sport £19.99
A good golf game at an amazing price.

Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker
(80: Recommended) Hit Squad – Sport £14.99
Dangerously addictive snooker sim.

Lucky's Casino Adventure
(60) Mirage – Card Game £44.99
Challenging, fun, totally addictive but a bit pricey.

Lure Of The Temptress
(55) Hit Squad – Adventure £14.99
Old and fading.

Power Game 2 (CD)
(70) Activision – Simulation £29.99
Worth looking at if you don't have the hardware to run the latest sim.

Robinson's Requiem
(85: Recommended) Daze Marketing – Role-Playing Game £39.99
This is a highly original and addictive "survival sim", which, unfortunately, has some
annoying bits.

Sam And Max Hit The Road
(93: Classic) US Gold – Adventure £45.99
Brilliantly original and a highly humorous jaunt.

Sim City Classic
(70) Hit Squad – Strategy £16.99
Still a great game but check out *Sim City 2000* first.

Sim City Enhanced
(82: Recommended) Interplay – Strategy £49.99
Sim City's an excellent game but 50 quid is a bit steep for a few enhancements.

Sleepwalker
(45) Hit Squad – Platform Game £9.99
Third-rate platformer. Stay well away from it.

Space Hulk
(87: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Strategy £39.99
Still a tremendous game, but not as good as the disk-based version.

Summer Challenge & Winter Challenge
(80: Recommended) Accolade – Sport £19.99
Good compilation, great value.

The Horde
(87: Recommended) US Gold – Strategy/Arcade £44.99
Not an original concept but extremely well implemented.

The Rock 'N' Roll Years – The '50s
(70) Supervision – General Interest £24.99
Handy for '50s music lovers or as a reference – but we doubt if it'll get you rockin' round the clock.

The Settlers
(89: Recommended) Blue Byte – Strategy £39.99
A damn fine, engrossing game.

Theatre Of War
(70) Hit Squad – Strategy £12.99
Excellent strategy game and it looks cool too.

UFO
(93: Classic) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
Incredibly addictive strategy game.

Wembley Rugby League
(66) Audiogenic – Sport £29.99
This manages to be quite an improvement on previous rugby games.

Wolfpack
(60) Optima – Strategy £29.99
Disappointingly average.

World Cup Challenge
(48) Winsport – Sport £29.95
Disappointing, absurdly RAM-hungry and limited in its playing life.

Issue 17 – August 1994

1942: Pacific Air War
(89: Recommended) MicroProse – Flight Sim £44.99
Two great games – *Carrier Battles* and *Task Force 1942* – in one package. It's a winner!

Al Quadim: The Genie's Curse
(40) US Gold/SSI – Role-Playing Game £35.99
The thinking amoeba's beat 'em up.

Burntime
(43) Max Design – Strategy £39.99
Hey, it's just like being there.

Cool Spot
(80: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Platform Game £29.99
Charm and accessibility save it from being strictly seventies-up!

Delta V
(64) Bethesda Softworks – Shoot 'Em Up £45.99
Very fast and pretty stunning to look at, but it won't keep you up into the night.

Dinosaur Detective Agency
(42) Alternative Software – Platform Game £16.99
Cheap – but that's no reason to be cheerful.

Empire Soccer
(57) Empire – Sport £29.99
Let down by the small viewing area, unintelligent player reactions and poor scrolling.

Good To Firm
(50) New Era Software – Sport £29.99
Horse-racing fanatics might get something out of it, but the experience will pall.

International Tennis Open
(88: Recommended) Philips Interactive Media – Sport £44.99
Definitely the new number one seed in the field of PC tennis simulations.

Jack Nicklaus (CD)
(78) Accolade – Sport £16.99
A perfectly seviceable golf game with a good course editor tacked on. Wait for me while I put my golfing shoes on...

Newsweek 3 Globocop (CD)
(0) Mindscape – General Interest £39.99
The most expensive beer mat in the world.

Overlord
(85: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Simulation £39.99
An old idea made new with some interesting tweaks.

Pinball Dreams 2
(70) 21st Century Entertainment – Pinball Game £19.99
Not bad at all. There's plenty for pinball wizards to get their flippers into.

Shanghai II: Dragon's Eye
(88: Recommended) Activision – Puzzle Game £29.99
Puzzles galore in this excellent addition to the rather mediocre range of games currently available for Windows.

Sherlock Holmes – The Case Of The Serrated Scalpel
(48) Electronic Arts – Adventure £49.99
Elementary, my dear Watson... and that's the problem.

Simon The Sorcerer (CD)
(89: Recommended) Adventuresoft UK Ltd – Adventure £44.99
A tricky adventure jaunt boosted by excellent talkie bits.

Syndicate (CD)
(92: Classic) Electronic Arts – Strategy £39.99
What a game. What a barg.

Tactical Manager
(75) Black Legend – Sport £34.99
An interesting little number with the odd weakness, but several nice ideas.

Theme Park
(93: Classic) Electronic Arts – Strategy £44.99
A highly inventive "business" sim that's fun, fun, fun all the way. Hip hip hoorah for Bullfrog.

Walls Of Rome
(74) Digital Integration – Strategy £16.99
Good, if thin, fun.

World Cup USA '94
(78) US Gold – Sport £32.99
Good features; difference of opinion over the gameplay.

Zool 2
(82: Recommended) Millennium – Platform £34.99
As they say, if you liked *Zool*, you'll love this.

Issue 18 – September 1994

Beneath A Steel Sky (CD)
(72) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £39.99
Comic book-style adventure with excellently funny dialogue but lacking any real depth.

D-Day
(40) Impressions – War Game £39.99
A sluggish, unrealistic and bug-ridden attempt at a war game without many redeeming features.

FIFA International Soccer
(70) Electronic Arts – Sport £39.99
Looks and sounds great, but lacks gameplay.

Harpoon II
(70) Electronic Arts – Simulation £44.99
Massive, embarrassingly serious sim. Superb detail, occasionally nail-biting, always slooooow.

Inherit The Earth – Quest For The Orb
(72) US Gold – Adventure £39.99
A well-thought out gentle little brainteaser for those who fancy a "sensible" game.

International Sensible Soccer
(78) Renegade – Sport £19.99
One of the best on the PC, but still not up to the Amiga version.

Litil Divil (CD)
(88: Recommended) Gremlin Graphics – Adventure £34.99
Excellent, original and addictive.

Metal And Lace: The Battle Of The Robo Babes
(35) Megatech – Beat 'Em Up £39.99
Totally devoid of any entertainment value whatsoever.

On The Ball
(68) Ascon – Sport £34.99
Too many frills, not enough body.

Outpost
(84: Recommended) Sierra On-Line – Strategy £49.99
A superb game. Addictive if you've got the hardware, hell if you haven't.

Shadow Of The Comet (CD)
(88: Recommended) Infogrames – Adventure £39.99
A worthwhile reworking of a great game, but still very idiosyncratic.

Soccer Kid
(30) Krisalis – Platform Game £29.99
If you want happening platform action, then buy something else.

Theatre Of Death
(35) Psygnosis – Arcade/Strategy £34.99
Below average imitation of an above-average game.

TIE Fighter
(94: Classic) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Space Sim £49.99
Sheer, undiluted quality. Treat yourself to a copy.

Issue 19 – October 1994

74 Wargame Construction Set 2: Tanks!
(90: Classic) SSI – Wargame £39.99
Never mind the 50-ton tanks – this is 50-tons of solid, fire-belching wargame. Absolutely brilliant.

Battle Bugs
(65) Dynamix – Strategy £TBA
A battle game with bugs in it (as opposed to a bugged battle game).

Dark Legions
(85: Recommended) SSI – Strategy £35.99
Wonderfully entertaining animations and game screens with hidden strategic depths.

Heimdall 2
(45) Core – Adventure £39.99
Great game, shame you can't play it.

Hell Cab
(50) Time Warner – Adventure £49.99
It's the same old story. Great graphics, but sadly lacking in gameplay.

IndyCar Racing Expansion Pack
(94: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Driving £17.99
These tracks are better than the original tracks (if you pretend Phoenix doesn't exist).

Ishar III: The Seven Gates Of Infinity
(50) Simarils – Strategy £39.99
Sum up *Ishar III* in one word? Avoid. Simple as that. The worst of a bunch.

KGB
(65) Hit Squad – Adventure £14.99
Bargain? Maybe. Boring? Definitely.

Kick Off 3
(55) Anco – Sport £29.99
Nice features, but gameplay not up to much.

Manchester United Premier League Champions
(60) Krisalis – Sport £29.99
Sensi revisited (although not as good) with a lot of features thrown in.

Planet Football
(68) Infogrames – Sport £39.99
The World Cup produced a rash of rush releases. This is not one of the best.

Police Quest IV – Open Season
(80: Recommended) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £44.99



(Left) *Theme Park: Sim City* eat your heart out.

« Atmospheric and very entertaining. A bit of a let down at the end, though.

Summer Challenge
(73) Hit Squad – Sport £12.99
Not a bad game by sports sim standards and easy to cheat at, but do you really want another sport sim?

Under A Killing Moon
US Gold – Adventure £59.99
Pigs can fly. Interactive movies do exist. Sort of.

Wing Commander: Armada
(76) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £44.99
Lots of good ideas stuck together but it doesn't hang quite right.

Issue 20 – November 1994

Alien Legacy
(80: Recommended) Sierra – Strategy £39.99
Space strategy thing which is a bit like *Outpost* without the pretty bits. Daunting at first, but ultimately very rewarding.

Chaos Engine
(80: Recommended) Renegade – Arcade £32.99
A damned good, multi-direction scrolling, shooty thing with lots of big guns and silly characters.

Colonization
(90: Classic) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
Try to imagine *Civilization* with more depth and better graphics. Well done... you've just imagined *Colonization*.

Cyclemania (CD)
(83: Recommended) Accolade – Arcade £39.99
Extremely competent *Road Rash* 3DO rip-off with lovely digitised backdrops and big motorbikes.

Desert Strike
(78) Gremlin - Arcade £34.99
Conversion of the Mega Drive classic, isometric helicopter, blast 'em up game. The graphics are a bit crap but it's immensely playable.

Doom II
(90: Classic) Virgin Interactive – Arcade £49.99
The sequel to one of the best games ever. New graphics, a new gun and new monsty-wonsties. Miss it at your peril.

Inferno (CD)
(88: Recommended) Ocean – Space/Sim £44.99
Eagerly awaited game from DID. Lots of big space ships and silly looking aliens. One of the better space combat games.

KA-50 Hokum
(85: Recommended) Virgin – Simulation £39.99
Without a doubt the very best helicopter simulator money can buy. Something for the propeller heads out there (yes, we know you're out there...).

NHL Hockey 95 (CD)
(91: Classic) EA – Sports/Arcade £34.99
A new version of the top-down scrolly, ice hockey game from EA. Basically the same as the original (reviewed issue seven) but with new stats.

PGA 486 (CD)
(91: Classic) Electronic Arts – Sports £44.99
Gorgeous looking, solid playing, tasty little golf game. One of the best on the PC so far.

Pinball Dreams CD
(70) 21st Century – Arcade £39.99
Eight wonderfully designed, smoothly scrolling pinball tables. Why is it on CD? 'Cause there are lots of pointless rendered bits, that's why.

System Shock
(95: Classic) EA/Origin – RPG £44.99
Pant-wettingly fantastic, cyberpunk, RPG thing. All hail *System Shock*, that shalt be king hereafter (until *System Shock II* comes out, that is).

Issue 21 – December 1994

Alone In the Dark II CD
(93: Classic) Infogrames – Adventure £44.99
A sequel that is noticeably better than the original and with some serious CD enhancements. What a refreshing change.

Dawn Patrol
(80: Recommended) Empire – Flight simulation £44.99
A gorgeous looking SVGA WWI flight sim with a bit of a different idea behind it... it's an interactive book apparently.

Dreamweb
(74) Empire – RPG £44.99
Cyberpunk RPG with lots of violence and a shagging scene that has now become infamous.

Ecstatica
(93: Classic) Psygnosis – Adventure £44.99
An utterly brilliant *Alone in the Dark*-alike with ellipsoid-generated characters and lots of pert buttocks.

FIFA CD
(76) Electronic Arts – Sports £39.99
A smart-looking footy game that just falls short of being an absolute belter.

Little Big Adventure
(93: Classic) Electronic Arts – Adventure £44.99
A truly amazing adventure with pretty graphics and weird French gameplay. Gobsmacking.

Magic Carpet
(96: Classic) Electronic Arts – Shoot 'em up £44.99
The sequel to one of the best games ever – and we do mean ever. New graphics, a new gun and new monsty-wonsties. Miss it at your peril.

Project X
(76) Team 17 – Shoot 'em up £19.99
A very competent and nicely low-priced little shoot 'em up.

Rise of the Robots
(88: Recommended) Mirage – Beat 'em up £44.99
Possibly the best beat 'em up on the PC so far with some excellent rendered sprites.

Space Simulator
(75) Microsoft – Simulator £39.99
A huge simulation of man's quest for space that is a little too ambitious for its own good.

Star Crusader
(60) Gametech – Shoot 'em up £39.99
Basically this is a poor man's *Wing Commander* with some nice CD bits.

Transport Tycoon
(94: Classic) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
One of the best strategy games around and a more than worthy sequel to *Railroad Tycoon*.

Total Carnage
(74) ICE – Shoot 'em up £27.99
Good challenging fun and a more than competent conversion of the original arcade machine.

Issue 22 – January 1995

Aces of the Deep
(90: Classic) Dynamix/Sierra – £39.99
Graphics, gameplay, sound and atmo combine to make this the best sub game available.

All New World of Lemmings
(78) Digital Integration – £39.99
If you like all the other *Lemmings* games, you'll like this one too.

Armored Fist
(86: Recommended) US Gold/Novalogic £44.99
Commanche on wheels. Er, tracks. You know what I mean.

Creature shock
(78) Virgin – £49.99
An engrossing, atmospheric 3D adventure game. Great graphics, absorbing levels, but lousy soundtrack.

CyberWar
(55) SCI – £49.99
It looks amazing. The gameplay isn't.

Dark Sun II
(80: Recommended) Mindscape – £44.99
Love it for its brains not for its looks.

Discworld
(96: Classic) Psygnosis – £49.99
Discworld is possibly the best point-and-click adventure game ever made.

Front Page sports Baseball
(85: Recommended) Sierra – £44.99
It takes all the best bits from all the best games and ends up being the best.

Klik 'n' Play
(88: Recommended) Europress – £39.99
Neat intuitive, and loads of fun.

Novastorm
(40) Psygnosis – £44.99
Repeat ad nauseam: "Pretty graphics doth not a game make."

Power Drive
(50) US Gold – £39.99
30 whole points off for no two-player mode. Sod off *Power Drive*.

Quarantine
(80: Recommended) Gametek – £39.99
An excellent blast and it looks good too.

Retribution
(45) Gremlin Interactive – £39.99
Not only is it a below average shoot 'em up, it has pretensions too.

US Navy Fighters
(90: Classic) Electronic Arts – £44.99
If it had a multi-player facility, I'd give it 100. But it hasn't, so I won't.

Warcraft
(75) Interplay – £39.99
Good, simple, addictive strategy game.

Issue 23 – February 1995

Alone in the Dark 3
(95 – Classic) Infogrames – Adventure £44.99
The mega-stonkingly weird and wonderful final chapter in the *Alone in the Dark* trilogy.

Cannon Fodder 2
(74) Virgin Interactive – Arcade/Strategy £34.99
Just more of the same or or is *Cannon Fodder 2* a significant improvement? Sensible returns with more "fun with a gun".

Commander Blood
(81 – Recommended) Mindscape – Adventure £44.99
It's French, and guess what? It's weird. Very weird. We try not to get at them for it... but this is just plain mad.

Cyberia
(80 – Recommended) Interplay – Adventure/Shoot 'em up £49.99
A contender for the "Best-looking game of 1994" award. Tastier than treacle pudding with lashings of thick custard, and almost certainly better than *Rebel Assault*.

Dragon Lore
(81 – Mindscape) Interplay – Adventure £44.99
Cryo's epic multi-CD graphic adventure finally arrives. Is it just more French weirdness or is it actually a decent game?

Hammer of the Gods
(77) US Gold – Strategy £TBA
Nordic domination and general Euro-bashing in this simple but addictive strategy war sim from New World Computing.

Kyrandia 3
(87 – Recommended) Virgin – Adventure £44.99
Westwood's *Fables and Fiends* series makes it to number three, and this time you get to play the bad guy!

Lion King
(71) Virgin – Platform game £29.99
The smash-hit movie turns into a reasonable-ish platform game. *PC Zone* good tip number one (in a series of...) – just pretend your PC is a Mega Drive.

NASCAR Racing
(84 – Recommended) Virgin – Racing Sim £44.99
Payrus follows up *IndyCar* with the popular American sport of driving round and round in circles.

Noctropolis
(79) Electronic Arts – Adventure £44.99
For a change Electronic Arts goes all weird, gothic and horrific in this unusual super-hero adventure.

Ultimate Body Blows
(78) Team 17 – Beat 'em up £29.99
An Amiga conversion from Team 17. Don't be put off by that, though – it's actually quite good.

Voyeur
(40) Interplay – Adventure £39.99
Not as pervy as people think. Yes, there are suspenders and braziers in it but no nudity and no naughtiness (well, not much. at least not enough to satisfy the male staff on *PC Zone*).

Wing Commander 3
(62) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £59.99
Four million dollars, Luke Skywalker and a well-known porn actress – definitely a potentially interesting situation if ever there was one.

Issue 24 – March 1995

Aladdin
(70) Virgin – Arcade £29.99
He leaps tall buildings, cuts through baddies with his scimitar and wears pointy slippers. He's Aladdin – who else.

Dark Forces
(95 – Classic) LucasArts/Virgin – Action adventure £54.99
The empire is finally Doom-ed, but is it better than the real thing? We bring you the first review of the game everyone's itching to get their hands on, in a special world exclusive, courtesy of LucasArts and Virgin.

Doom Clones: Head to Head
(55) Merit – Action adventure £39.99
We put Merit's *Dr Radiaki* up against *Virtuoso* from Elite and run for cover (well, *Doom*, actually).

Hell: A Cyberpunk Thriller
(25) Gametek – Adventure £39.99
It is: it isn't. If it's really this bad then start praying for forgiveness immediately.

Kick Off 3: European Challenge
(70) Anco – Sport £29.99
The last *Kick Off* was an absolute nightmare. Have Anco finally got it together in Europe?

King's Quest VII
(93 – Classic) Sierra – Adventure £44.99
The latest point and click extravaganza from the Roberta Williams' school of mush-wushy, cutesy-wutesyness.

Knights of Xentar
(10) Megatech – Adventure £49.99
A plentiful lack of Beat 'em up action strides onto the PC, courtesy of Megatech. Ouch!

Menzoberanzan
(68) Mindscape – RPG £TBA
Not a tasty lozenge that promises to clear your stuffy nose and soothe your sore throat, but a rather ordinary RPG from SSI.

Metaltech: Earthsiege
(87– Recommended) Sierra – Simulation £39.99
Go stomping mad in this spectacular HERC-fest from Sierra. Just one thing though, why have extravagant HERCs that walk when the terrain is perfectly flat?

Realms of Arkania: Star Trail
(85– Recommended) US Gold – RPG £44.99
The sequel to the keenly received *Blade of Destiny* finally makes it onto CD-ROM. Hip, hip...

SuperKarts
(82– Recommended) Virgin – Action £TBA
The most fun you can have with your bum only an inch off the ground, when wearing a crash helmet and clad in brightly-coloured leather.

TIE Fighter: Defender of the Empire
(73) LucasArts – Space/Action £19.99
Two new missions and a new ship. What will they think of next?

Wings of Glory
(78) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £TBA
Chocks away as Origin reach for the skies to do battle with the Hun, dastardly chaps with 'taches and every other WWI flight sim ever created.

Issue 25 – April 1995

BC Racers
(62) Core Design – Racing sim £34.99
Chuck Rock meets Super Mario Kart. Unfortunately, the clash of these two mega-games hasn't proven to be that good. Oops.

Big Red Adventure
(70) Core Design – Adventure £39.99
The follow up to *Nippon Safes*... arrgh, keep it away! Hang on a minute, though, this looks like it could actually be quite good.

Bioforge
(95 Classic) Electronic Arts – Action adventure £44.99
The first "real" interactive movie? Or is *Bioforge* just another game that looks like *Alone in the Dark*?

Descent
(94 Classic) Interplay – 3D shoot 'em up £44.99

(Right) *Alone in the Dark 3:* More Carnby, cobwebs, murder, mystery and mayhem.

(Far right) *Command & Conquer.* A case of *Cannon Fodder* meets *Dune 2.*





Could this be the game to finally knock *Doom* off the top spot? The fabulous 3D game from Interplay arrives at last.

Heretic
(78) iD/Raven – 3D shoot 'em up £39.99
"*Doom* in tights." Can a fighting fantasy version of the greatest game of all time, ever, ever, really be better? Er, no.

Iron Assault
(57) Virgin – 3D shoot 'em up £34.99
A distinctly average "big robot" game joins the ranks of other distinctly average "big robot" games on the PC.

Legions
(65) Mindscape – Strategy war game £34.99
This is definitely one for the Hex-heads, this is. It's intense, ludicrously strategic and it runs under *Windows*. Eek!

Lost Eden
(76) Virgin – Adventure £34.99
Cryo's dinosaur game finally arrives a year after it was unveiled. *Jurassic Park* meets *Dragon Lore.*

Issue 26 – May 1995

Atari Action Pack
(50) Activision – VCS Atari Compilation £24.99
This compilation includes lots of really ancient Activision Atari VCS games, all for *Windows* and all on one CD. It's like a time machine that takes you somewhere a bit crap!

Cyclones
(78) Mindscape – Adventure £44.99
Yet another *Doom* clone – but not a bad one by any means – from the team that brought us both *Heretic* and *Shadowcaster.*

Football Glory
(60) Kompart – Sports £TBA
Q: When is *Sensible Soccer* not really *Sensible Soccer*?
A: When it's a not-quite-so-good copy called *Football Glory.*

Guilty
(58) Psygnosis – Adventure £39.99
Sequel-ola. *Guilty* is the follow up to the awful *Innocent Until Caught*, and it's significantly better, but still not brilliant.

Jungle Strike
(79) Gremlin – Shoot 'em up £39.99
Another sequel... this time, the sequel to *Desert Strike.* But this shoot 'em up is bigger, more varied and harder than the original.

NBA Live
(90 Classic) Electronic Arts – Sport £44.99
EA Sports awakens from a period of dormancy with this absolutely corking basketball arcade game – the best of its type around.

Renegade
(75) SSI – Space Sim £44.99
SSI's *Tie Fighter/Wing Commander* wannabe in glorious SVGA. A surprisingly playable space warfare game.

Rise of the Triad
(82 Classic) US Gold and PD Selections – Adventure £39.95
Some love it and some hate it... but of the *Doom*-alikes, this is one of the best.

Super Frog
(40) Team 17 – Platform £19.99
A platform game with a frog in it... Uh-huh. Okay.

Tank Commander
(60) Domark – Simulation £39.99
A budget-style tank game at full price. If you've got more money than sense, you'll really love it!

Woodruff and the Schnibble of Azimuth
(75) Sierra – Adventure £39.99
A weird adventure game from Sierra. A wonderfully deceptive adventure with comic-book feel!

X-COM
(94 Classic) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
The first *X-COM* was absolutely brilliant. This sequel is even better still.

Issue 27 – June 1995

Blind Date
(25) Domark – Adventure £39.99
Chris had a jolly splendid time reviewing last month's "interactive-try-to-get-laid-simulator". What will the softies come up with next?

Full Throttle
(92 – Classic) LucasArts/Virgin – Adventure £49.99
Hooray for LucasArts adventures. Big, tough guy, biker stuff this time. Splendid.

Flight of the Amazon Queen
(50) Warner Interactive – Adventure £39.99
This game from Warner Interactive is desperately trying to be a LucasArts adventure but failing quite miserably. It's naff.

Hardball 4
(83 Recommended) Accolade/Warner – Arcade/Sports £39.99
Returning May's theme of "sequels", Warner Interactive brings us the fourth *Hardball.* Surely Warner have to call it quits now?

High Seas Trader
(62) Impressions – Strategy/Simulation £39.99
Affectionately referred to as "High Street Trader" in the *PC Zone* office, this is the latest strategy offering from Impressions.

Magic Carpet: Hidden Worlds
(80 Recommended) Bullfrog – Arcade/Strategy £19.99
A sort of add-on thingy for *Magic Carpet* with lots of snow. The trouble is though, it's completely and utterly, stupidly, bloody hard.

PyroTechnica
(69) Psygnosis – 3D Shoot 'em up £29.99
Very poor *Descent*-wannabe from Psygnosis. Fortunately though, it's considerably cheaper.

Psycho Pinball
(78) Codemasters – Arcade £44.99
Pinball from Codemasters. Some nice tables. Some nice music. Sorted.

Slipstream 5000
(88 Recommended) Gremlin Int. – Arcade/Shoot 'em up £39.99
Three-dimensional-fabby-whizzo racing/shooting/ speedy thing from Gremlin. Splendid stuff, and better than boring, run-of-the-mill racing games.

Star Trek: TNG – "A Final Unity"
(94 Classic) MicroProse – Adventure £49.99
Yes, it may have a ridiculously long title, but this is, without a doubt, the best game to bear the *Star Trek* name so far.

Super Streetfighter II Turbo
(90 Classic) Gametek – Beat 'em up £39.99
It would seem that last month's theme was "games with very long names". Gametek's *SSF/II Turbo II* is one of the best arcade conversions ever seen on the PC.

Ticonderoga
(78) Mindscape – Naval/strategy £44.99
Silly name but a damn fine naval strategy game. Lovely graphics and splendid CD bits.

Virtua Chess
(85 Classic) Titus – Strategy £44.99
Snazzy 3D SVGA chess thingy from Titus, France. This one's different looking and with a ninja bastard brainbox.

Warriors
(85 Classic) Mindscape – Beat 'em up £39.99
What, yet another beat 'em up? Anyone would think there's a shortage of 'em or something.

Issue 28 – July 1995

1830
(68) US Gold – Board Game £39.99
Set in the early years of American colonisation, a sort of *Railroad Tycoon* meets *Risk.* Strictly for those of trainspotter persuasion.

Alex Dampier Pro Hockey
(66) Merit Software – Sports Sim £39.95
Ice hockey sim with *FIFA*-style viewpoint, but impossible control system, and comes no where near *NHL Hockey '95.*

Alien Breed: Tower Assault
(81) Team 17 – Shoot 'Em Up £29.99
The sequel to *Alien Breed*, but superior to the PC version of the original. Great graphics and frenzied, addictive shooty action.

Brett Hull Hockey '95
(73) Accolade/Warner - Sports Sim £39.99
Top-down ice hockey gams, which doesn't match the king of ice hockey sims, *NHL Hockey '95*, but betters *Alex Dampier Pro Hockey '95.*

Chaos Control
(40) Philips/Infogrames – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
Unbelievably terrible futuristic FMV shoot 'em up that was passable on CD-i, but should never have seen the light of day on PC.

Command & Conquer
(95 – Classic) Virgin – Strategy adventure £44.99
Dune 2 meets *Cannon Fodder* in this brilliant game of soldiers.

Daedalus Encounter
(58) Virgin – Adventure £44.95
Interactive movie game that fails to make the grade – and, for what it's worth, stars Tia Carrere, the babe from *Wayne's World.*

Dominus
(42) US Gold – Strategy Game £39.99
Fantasy battle game with good graphics and comprehensive interface but lacking that vital ingredient – gameplay.

Frontier: First Encounters
(78) Gametek – Space Strategy Sim £39.99
Disappointing enhanced version of *Elite II*, which is also bugged to jiggery.

Jagged Alliance
(72) Mindscape – Strategy Game £39.99
Risk meets *Syndicate* in this strategy battle jaunt. Not groundbreaking or particularly original but quite good fun all the same.

Loadstar
(35) BMG Interactive – Shoot 'Em Up £34.99
Dreadful FMV shoot 'em up not worth the paper its manual was printed on. .

Machiavelli The Prince
(89) MicroProse – Strategy Game £44.99
Colonization-style sim packed with political intrigue, assassinations, plagues, pirates and a unique play by e-mail feature.

Man Utd: The Double
(71) Krisalis – Sports Sim £29.99
The best *Manchester United* game yet, but it's still not a patch on the excellent *Sensible Soccers* of this world.

Sim Tower
(70) Maxis – Strategy Game £39.99
Sim City viewed from the side with the emphasis on tower blocks, but not as addictive– and the presentation is dire.

Virtual Pool
(91 – Classic) Interplay – Sports Sim £44.99
Superb gameplay and 3D graphics, complete with a multi-player network option. About as close to a real game of pool as you can get.

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Civil War
(83 – Recommended) Empire – Strategy Game £44.99
The sequel to *Fields of Glory*, and jolly nice it looks too.

FX Fighters
(93 – Classic) Philips/GTE – Beam 'em up £39.99
The closest thing to *Virtua Fighter* on the PC, and by far the best beat 'em up you can buy.

Hi-Octane
(83 – Recommended) Bullfrog/EA – Racing game £39.99
Bullfrog surprises everyone by releasing a racing game, and surprises everyone even more by not saying anything about it until it's nearly finished. Hmm.

Micro Machines 2
(92 – Classic) Codemasters – Racing game £44.99
A brilliant, simple and effective racing game with a rather nifty little track designer thrown in for good measure.

Orion Conspiracy
(36) Domark – Adventure game £39.99
Domark unveils what has to be the worst-scripted computer game ever conceived.

Perfect General 2
(82 – Recommended) Mirage Software – Strategy War Game £44.99
Hex-tastic strategy game for those of you who really like your war games intense.

Picture Perfect Golf
(30) Empire – Sports sim £44.99
Pretty bloody naff. But hey, If you want to look at nice, digitised pictures of a golf course, this is well worth the dosh.

Prisoner of Ice
(88 – Recommended) Infogrames – Adventure game £44.99
The second game in Infogrames' Cthulhu range, and what a stonker of a point-and-click adventure it is too.

Scottish Open Golf
(60) Core Design – Sports sim £39.99
Core Design finally releases its 3D virtual golf thing. There are some okay bits and some pretty nob bits. Unfortunately it's the nob bits that win through.

Silverload
(7) Millennium/Psygnosis – Adventure game £39.99
Millennium and Psygnosis team up together and produce an adventure which is truly... quite awful.

Striker 95
(62) Time Warner – Sports sim £34.99
A football game that looks really fab and groovy, but doesn't quite cut it in the gameplay stakes.

Ultimate Doom
(90 – Classic) GT Interactive – Shoot 'em up £29.99
The original *Doom* re-packaged with an extra episode. Is it another classic or just a colossal rip-off?

Vortex
(80 – Recommended) Warner Interactive – Interactive movie £39.99
It's an interactive movie. No, it's a game, It's an interactive movie. No, it's a game. Arrrghhh!!!

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Across the Rhine
(86 – Recommended) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
Well, if you're a propellor head you'll think it's the dogs gonads. If you're a bit of a thicky, you'll still like it, once you work your way through the laborious manual, that is.

Action Soccer
(50) Ubisoft – Football sim £34.99
It had potential, but ultimately *Action Soccer* seems to have been relegated to the ranks of "another crap footie game".

Air Power
(84 – Recommended) Mindscape – Flight sim £44.99
Rowan teams up with Mindscape and chucks in all the best bits from its other flight sims, to make up a sort of fantasy strategy game, which is really pretty groovy.

AIV Networks
(80 – Recommended) Infogrames - Business sim £44.99
A business sim for people who love trains. (Yee gods! What next?)

Dungeon Master 2
(59) Interplay - RPG £44.99
It came out late and it wasn't worth the wait. Disappointingly out-dated and old-fashioned.

Last Dynasty
(45) Sierra - Space Combat sim £44.99
A good *Windows*-based adventure game, which is completely ruined by crap combat sections.

Lords of Midnight
(60) Domark – Adventure £44.99
Another very old game that's been given the sequel treatment – the biggest let-down since that leak in my inflatable Claire Rayner.

Sim Town
(81 – Recommended) Maxis – Simulation £29.99
Fun and educational in equal measures. But even better, you can make people say rude things when they're pissed off.

Simon the Sorcerer 2
(84 – Recommended) Adventure Soft (UK) – Adventure game £44.99
Simon returns with DMs and long hair. Even though Chris Barrie hasn't done the voice this time, it's still a bloody good talkie adventure.

Space Quest 6
(70) Sierra – Adventure game £44.99
Trite adventure completely devoid of humour. *Space Quest* fans will love it!

Terminal Velocity
(80 – Recommended) US Gold – Shoot 'em up £44.99
A very good 3D engine, wearing a pair of rather unoriginal and unaddivctive "game-play trousers".

US Marine Fighters
(92 – Classic) Electronic Arts – Flight sim £19.99
Absolutely brilliant. The only thing that prevented us giving *US Marine Fighters* 100 per cent was the lack of a network facility.

WORDPROCESSOR



Ol' Culkous continues to endear himself to the nation, whilst we find that there are still unusual foreign people out there putting pen to paper. Vent your views in the usual manner...

Culky Infiltrates Modern Society

Alwight. It's the Gavster here, from London, isn't it. Me and my mates was watching the latest ol' Culkous video and was wanting the plans for something from ol' Culkous' little red tank, isn't it – the rocket launcher. For a bit of a laugh. Just got me first car and Mr Gavster was reckoning on you's sending diagrams and stuff and equipment and the like on hows to build one for me new little red Vauxhall Corsa, isn't it. What d'ya reckon of that? We'll have a bit of a laugh, won't we?

Gavin Clark, South Kensington, London

Alwight mate, it's dead easy really, isn't it? All you need if you want something like ol' Culky's tank is a bit of a roof-rack and a coupla bits of drainpipe, isn't it. Then all you does is stick the rockets into the drainpipes and then we can have a bit of a laugh. Ol' Gavster will probably be wanting to get some rockets with long fuses though, coz it can get a bit messy if they go off before you want 'em to. Anyways, it's a doddle really.

Commanding Without Conquering

When I saw the *Command & Conquer* review a few months ago, I thought "right, I'll get that", and after phoning up my favourite stockist I'm told that it will not be out until the 29th of June. After waiting until the 29th I rang the shop again, and I then found that the game now won't be available until the end of August.

Why did *PC Zone* review the game when it did? It is quite clearly not finished yet and the review happened so long ago that when people do see the game in the shops they will have forgotten about the review.

Simon Montalent, Ewell, Surrey

Unfortunately, Command & Conquer *has been enlisted into that esteemed club... the totally, utterly and ridiculously late gang. When we reviewed the game earlier this year, we were given to believe that it was virtually finished. The game code itself was supposed to be complete and all that needed to be tweaked were a few minor cosmetic details. But, er... we're not sure what's happened since. We really loved the game (hence the cover and the big score) and we've been trying to blag a boxed copy so we can play it some more. However, every time we ring Virgin Interactive it seems that the game "isn't quite ready." Hopefully, it will be out by the beginning of September – but then again ,we thought it would be out in July.*

The Return Of The Psycho Foreigner

We haven't had a really good, weird letter for ages, but now everything is back to normal. This one's weird, badly spelt and has been sent from somewhere that we've never even heard of. As always, this letter has been printed verbatim for added comedy effect. Enjoy...



Write to PC Zone

There are numerous ways to transmit your delightful scrawlings to *PC Zone*. You can either use the traditional method, oft-described as "snail-mail" by the pretentious technocrats of this world...

WordProcessor
PC Zone
Dennis Publishing
19 Bolsover Street
London
W1P 7HJ

Or you can be really hip, trendy and cyber and do a whacky e-mail thing...

CompuServe: PC ZONE 100142, 2152
CIX: PCZONE@CIX.compulink.co.uk

I wrote to you before and I was ignored, why; because I was too kind to you and did too much sucking up, so you asked for it.

Your a pretentious little nurd who thinks he's funny and thinks he's got sex-appael, wel your right your kind of funny (forget the sex.)

Anyway, I just want to say that I don't like the new look. It's terrible, isn't it time to change or better increase the items covered instead of changing the layout? Tell us more about the Internet, give us more info about buggs in games (I really hate buggs) and what to do about it, who we shoud give a kick in the ball(x2)! And more competitions open to all of you readers you racist lot you are. I want goodies.

And another thing, your games reviews are subjective; example, I didn't like *Theme Park* it's crap where are the guns.

I admit that you guys are the best. I'm not gay but I love you guys.

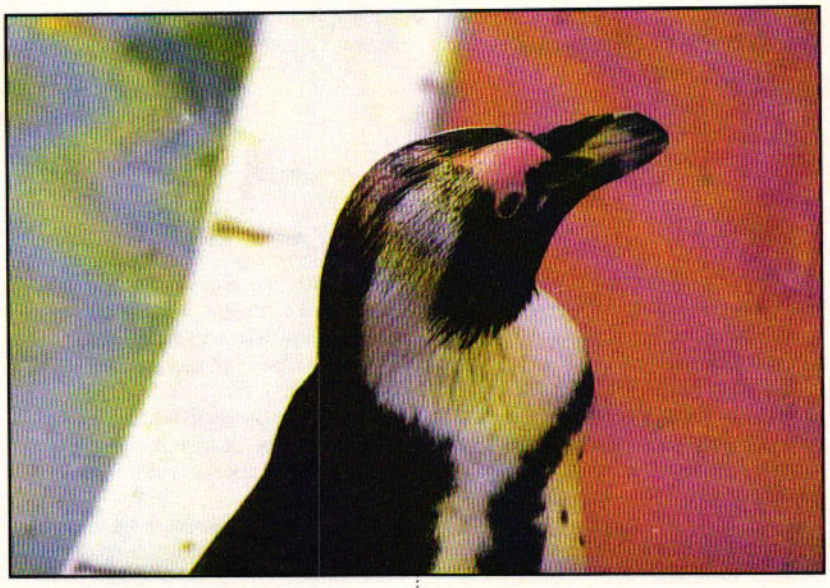
Gunter van Dijck, Berlare

Thank God. Just when we thought the letters page was getting more sensible, we get this. It restores your faith in humanity when you get a letter from someone with such an evident grasp on reality. Thank you Gunter, thank you.

Sexy Suzy

This is the first time I've felt moved enough to deflate Sexy Suzy, pack her away and actually write a letter. The reason? *Bits and PCs*, or rather the lack of it. Where did it go? More importantly – why did it go?

Sure, having a regular feature on the Internet is a good idea, but the vast majority of us don't have access to the damn thing. On the other hand, I have solved many problems by taking the



(Left) And here begins the *PC Zone* "save Percy the Penguin" appeal. Send your donations to the usual address.

advice that was printed in the *Bits and PCs* pages. I especially found the "What is it with..." boxes very informative. Oh bugger, does that mean I'm a techno bod? I'm not you know... I've got a girlfriend. Suzy. And, er, some bloke asked me for change the other day, so he's a mate. Erm, I walked past a pub once.

Graham Richardson, Nazeing, Essex

*We expanded the on-line coverage in the magazine because we've done research which proves that more and more of our readers are now interested in both downloading files and playing on-line games (*Doom *being the most prominent).*

As for Bits and PCs, *well... to be honest, it wasn't proving to be particularly popular. The number of letters we receive each month from people requiring technical assistance is vastly outweighed by the, er, "normal" (for want of a better word) letters. One of the reasons we expanded the* WordProcessor *section was so that we could: a) accommodate the large amount of mail that we get; and b) cover everything from death threats from deranged French people (and we do tend to get quite a lot... you should see some of the crap people send us these days) to technical help. If people still want assistance with file set-ups or hardware problems, we are still prepared to help.*

Argh! We've Been Found Out!

I found a strange thing the other day, an old edition of *Zero*. I was wondering whatever had happened to that magazine and lo and behold when I flicked through it, who did I see but David McCandless, Amaya Lopez, Paul Lakin and Duncan MacDonald. How very strange.

I don't know about toilets in *Doom*, but there are certainly a number of urinals in *Dark Forces*, complete with piss stains.

Jon (can't be bothered to write a surname), Worksop

Yes, all of the people you mentioned did work on Zero, *and yes, they do all now work for* PC Zone *from time to time. Also, our publisher Tim Ponting used to be the editor of* Zero. *The reason?* Zero *was published by Dennis Publishing and was effectively the forerunner to* PC Zone. *What a complete and utter surprise.*

Penguin Corner

Print this in your magazine or the penguin (*above right*) gets it.

Briggsy, Quarter

Not particularly original... but the fact that it's a penguin as opposed to a dog or a cat is vaguely amusing. Nice try.

Do You Want Chips With That?

Bloody Intel. Every time I've forked out cash for the latest chip, like some 786 or other such cobblers, it decides to dump it and create some new entry level. I wouldn't mind if it was just saying that you had the option to buy a more powerful processor, but oh no, the bastards even thought of that by ending production of the old one. What happened to all of the talk about the 400MHz 486? Christ knows what Intel will come up with next. Perhaps a disposable CPU, one which will have to be dumped after a year because the entry level has risen yet again. No, sorry – it's already done that – the sods.

And what about the Pentium, eh? How long before that's obsolete? Hmm, about five minutes I reckon. And will you be able to plug a P6 into a Pentium socket? Who knows?

At least there's *Plug 'n' Play*... not. Isn't it nice of Intel to try to make life easier for everyone? Yeah, right. It made sure that all you could use was a PCI-based machine – but this was only after everyone had forked out for a VESA bus machine.

I find it absolutely ridiculous that the technology is now obsolete the moment you buy it.

Anyone want to buy a 486DX2 in good condition, one careful owner?

Matthew Roby, Whitstable, Kent

It's true that in retrospect, the past few years have been somewhat messy as far as PC technology has gone, but we are now beginning to see a basic structure to which everything will adhere. One of the biggest problems has been that, because of the "open architecture" philosophy of the PC, there has never been any governing body that dictates standards. The only thing that has really dictated any kind of "standard" has been sales. Now everything is different. The two really strong bodies in our industry, Intel and Microsoft, have now set a group of standards, namely Plug 'n' Play, PCI, Windows 95, WinG *etc, as well as assisted with the establishment of future standards, such as the GLINT graphics standard due to be unleashed later in the year.*

Now that there is a firm base for our industry it shouldn't be so inconvenient to expand your system. Lets just hope that the damn thing works, eh?

Small Willy?

Having completely ruined my weekend I would like to give you the chance to redeem yourselves. Eagerly reading the July issue (number 28) I found the neat little test on page 99 to perform on my PC – a P-90, 8MB RAM, IDE hard drive – *(snore... zzz... Ed.).* Remember the *Doom* "time demo" test. I performed it, expecting an excellent score as I was confident that my PC could handle graphics very well. The thing is, it didn't. After repeating the test 17 times, reinstalling *Doom* and running countless checks, I got a crap score of 23fps. Why the hell then can a Gateway P-90 get a cool 43fps, with a spec no better than my machine? What am I doing wrong? Please explain to me how I can get into the 40fps league.

Anton Slaughter, Benson, Oxon

Why do you really care? Do you think I do? What's wrong with 23fps? That's virtually the same frame rate as a TV. Do you feel that your PC frame rate benchmark is some kind of penis-size compensator? Do you feel inadequate or something? Get a grip man.

More Bloody Hate Mail

Personally, I don't think that *PC Zone* should pick on any one particular person (although that bastard Shane Ritchie is pretty tempting). I feel that you should be needlessly cruel to everyone, except that charming chap David McCandless (*Macca – you've not been writing to us under another name again, have you? Ed.*)

Stuff your apology to the French, why are you sorry? You are giving an entire nation of unclean, smelly people exactly what they deserve. Look at 'em... they don't wash, shave, or even smoke decent »

« fags. Okay, so the sweaty buggers can make decent games, but does this cancel out all of the above bad points? No, of course it doesn't.

Derek Brooks, Chesham, Bucks

But don't you think that it's getting a bit boring? There's only so many times that you can moan about people being sweaty and smelling of garlic.

Wiping Out CDs

I used to clean cars as a part-time job, and one of the many things I noticed while doing so was that as a car gets polished over and over again, the scratches on the bodywork fade away (because, I presume, the polish fills in the scratches).

Once upon a time, while using my PC, the CD that I was using at the time wouldn't load and the light on my CD drive stayed lit for longer than usual. Annoyed by this, I took the CD out and noticed lots of little scratches on it.

Bing! At this point an idea came into my head. Why not try car polish on the CD? I left the polish on the disc for about ten minutes and then rubbed or "buffed" it off to leave a cleaner, more shiny, and somewhat less scratched CD. When I tested it out later I found that the disc now worked.

I've tried this on a number of CD's and it has worked perfectly every time. The car polishes I have used so far include *MER* and *Simoniz*, but I would expect all polishes to work.

I'm sure this is all a lot less expensive than some of the CD repair solutions I have seen advertised.

Thomas O'Duffy, Potters Bar, Herts

I'm no expert on car polish, but I do know that that sort of thing comes in two different varieties: the sort that fills in gaps with gunk; and the sort that works as a gentle abrasive that takes a very thin layer off the surface of whatever you're polishing. I suspect that it is the latter that is making your CDs seem perfect. The only problem is that, if you do it too much you'll wipe away the very thin layer of plastic that covers the pits in the CD's surface and you'll end up completely and irrecoverably buggering up your disc. I suggest you just keep your CDs in a safe place and just treat them with a bit more respect.

X-Wing On Hoth

I've been informed that whilst *Rebel Assault 2* is set to be released, LucasArts is intending to launch a further *X-Wing* data disk entitled "The Hoth Campaign". The missions are said to be close to the film *Empire Strikes Back*.

Basically, the planet Hoth has to be evacuated as the Empire has discovered it. New additions will be the Snow-speeders as you try to attack the AT-AT walkers.

Could you please tell me if I have something decent to look forward to or if I have to smack my said informant in the face?

Andrew McLean, Beds

Well we've not heard of anything like that here, although it sounds like an absolutely brilliant idea. But, unless LucasArts is playing this one very close to its chest, I would have to advise you to smack your pal as hard as possible. Give him one from me as well while you're at it.

On-Line Hits The Spot

Hoorah! *PC Zone* does it again. This time managing to add an On-Line section to the magazine without sounding like complete toss-pots. Other magazines have fallen foul to the current Internet "yuppie-type" thing, but not *Zone*. Love the new look.

Tara Foster, London, 100073,1450
(Taken from CompuServe)

When we redesigned the magazine, the On-Line portion was something that we were very keen to get in. However, as you have noticed, there is a definite tendency in these things to be so absorbed by the "culture" side that the guts of the whole thing gets lost in the wankyness.

PC Zone *is a games magazine and there is an awful lot of scope as far as editorial goes for us to cover On-Line issues in direct relation to games, and that is what we have tried to do. We'll tell you the best multi-player sites, the best places to download stuff and the people you should hang out with or avoid. You don't really need to know any more than that.*

I hope everyone feels as positive about this as you do.

Why Windows 95?

What's this I hear about *Windows 95* being the only operating system? Surely everything running under *Windows* is a bad idea? It's slow, crap and as far as I can tell it's only really any good for presenting strategy games.

Please can you tell me why is it that everything's moving this way?

Chris De Bie, Somewhere with no address

Windows 95 *will inevitably become THE operating system simply because of the way that Microsoft has developed the system. Hopefully it will be better for games as it's a true 32-bit operating system.*

Check out our feature this month for more details. Z

John's bit on the side...



I was at a sort of reunion party thing the other day, and as people do at this sort of event, we were all discussing what we were doing "job-wise". Obviously, there was all the usual stuff – jobs in sales, accounts, factories etc, but when it came to my bit I was struck with a revelation about this whole games industry thing. There I was, explaining that, "oh yes, I'm editing a magazine based in London, blah-de-blah...", but when someone asked what the magazine was about I got the distinct impression that they sort of glazed over.

When you come down to the yucky, messy guts of the whole sordid little affair, people generally still don't understand the significance or importance of the games market. This may sound a bit arrogant, but this industry is important and is growing at a quite staggering rate.

Last year, and the year before, the computer and video game industry proved to be significantly more successful than the music industry in terms of both turnover and sales. That's pretty impressive really when you first hear about it. But if you think it through, it's easy to see why. A real monster of a seller in the PC games market can sell around a million copies. This would be a respectable figure for a CD (although bands like *BonJoui* can still sell 15 million CDs), which sells at around £12. Games on the other hand sell for anything between £30 and £60, and there are easily as many of them released in a year as there are albums. We know this, the record companies know this (virtually all of them now either own or are pitching for large portions of the games industry) and now you know this.

However, there is still something of a stigma about the games industry, which means that it still isn't taken as seriously as it should be.

There is such a stigma, in fact, that it seems to have bothered many of the companies so much that even the very word "games" is taboo. Just think of how many companies now have the word "interactive" in their title: Virgin, BMG, Warner, Gremlin, Empire, Time Warner... the list goes on and on and, predictably, on.

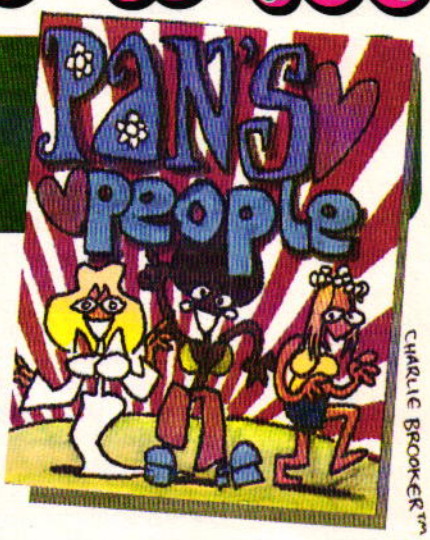
Interactive Multimedia Products we'd like to see

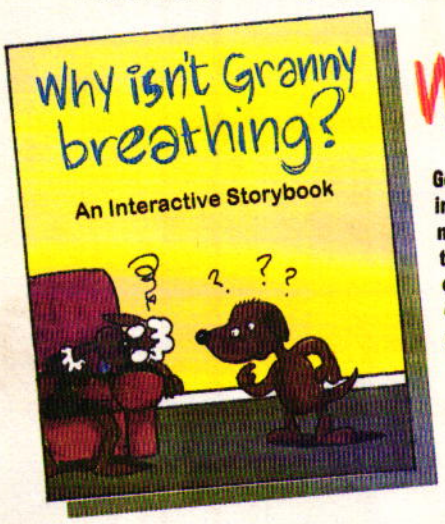
PAN'S PEOPLE INTERACTIVE



The real-time motion capture techniques mean that fab and groovy disco moves are only a joystick tag away!

Wouldn't you love to revisit those glory days of yesteryear? When pants were hot and the disco became an inferno? Well now, thanks to the wonder of interactive multimedia.. you can! Pan's People Interactive brings you the best of all possible worlds: a superb Seventies soundtrack- and the chance to choreograph Pan's People dance routines... in one great package! You're in charge of the action throughout! Simple joystick movements control the movement of Pan's People's arms and legs as you struggle to keep up with that far-out funky disco beat! Contains over thirty "secret moves", two fatalities, and five hours of music! Save your favourite routines to disk and replay them later to your friends! Includes Network play option for up to four players simultaneously! It's a frugging, shuffling, bopping, leaping explosion of fun, fun, fun!





Why isn't Granny breathing?

Gently introduce your children to the sombre subject of death and bereavement with this charming and sensitive interactive storybook. They'll follow Melvin Mutt through an adventure which begins with him finding his Grandmother lying dead in her favourite armchair. At first he is confused... "Why isn't Granny breathing?" Melvin learns the answer to this and many other questions before finally seeing his Grandmother laid to rest in a moving funeral ceremony. Your children will be entertained and educated along with Melvin, as this quality children's title gently explains the concept of death, and the grisly realities of a decaying human body, with over two hours of cartoon animation and full-motion-video autopsy footage.

Subjects covered by this title include:

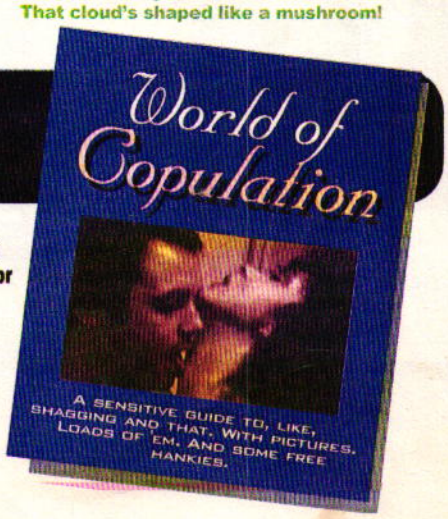
- **Death**
- **Old Age**
- **Decomposition**
- **The Soul**
- **Embalming**
- **The inescapable futility of existence**





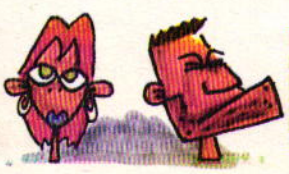
Other titles in the Melvin Mutt range:
What's that Daddy's drinkin'?
Where do junkies come from?
That cloud's shaped like a mushroom!

World of Copulation



The best-selling sex education video series enters the interactive age at last! Let Doctor Wallaby Smarm guide you through a wide range of sexual techniques and positions that are guaranteed to leave you and your lover gasping for breath like asmathic hurdlers, as you travel to the shuddering peak of sexual ecstasy and beyond!

FEMALE ISSUES:
Does he really love you?
Do you really love him?
What the hell are you doing with a loser like him anyway?
Finishing a relationship.
Forgetting all about him and finding somebody else within a week.



MALE ISSUES:
What is Sex, anyway?
How to slowly talk your lover into performing fellatio.
Should it bend in the middle like that?
Why masturbation shouldn't be embarassing, but is.
The fine art of bragging.



Mr Cursor

He wants a crap FMV motor racing game, but, um, he doesn't really.

WE'RE ABOUT TO GET THE SUPERB (well, one presumes) *Geoff Crammond's Grand Prix 2*, and for that I say "excellento, about time". But this month's column isn't about *Geoff Crammond's Grand Prix 2*, so I will start again... With motor racing in general.

If you watch shows like *Sport In Question*, or read snoozy think-pieces in anorak mags like *Autosport*, you may have come across the fart-brigade arguments, which are as follows:

"Modern Formula One is nothing like it was back in the 50s and 60s... namby pamby "pop stars" these days... no real personalities... single file traffic... in my day the cars would powerslide round hairpins at 160mph, ten abreast... you never knew who would win until it was over... the drivers would laugh bravely and denounce God as they burnt to death; their broken, flame-grilled bodies spitting hot fat onto the pot-holed race track..." And so on.

All very predictable, really. Some rose-tinted nostalgic baloney mixed with a few truisms. But yes, motor racing was, undoubtedly, more dangerous back in the "old days". And not just for the on-average-one-death-per-race drivers. Did you know, for instance, that in the 1953 Argentinean Grand Prix, 18 spectators were killed by rogue cars? And that at no point was the race actually stopped? Brilliant! Now that'd be good telly.

But as for the sudden drop-off of "personalities" in the 90s? Bollocks. At the moment we've got a re-creation of WW2 – just about... the Brits versus, er, a German. (Along with a few other apt nationalities thrown in just for good historic measure.)

Camera, action, crash!

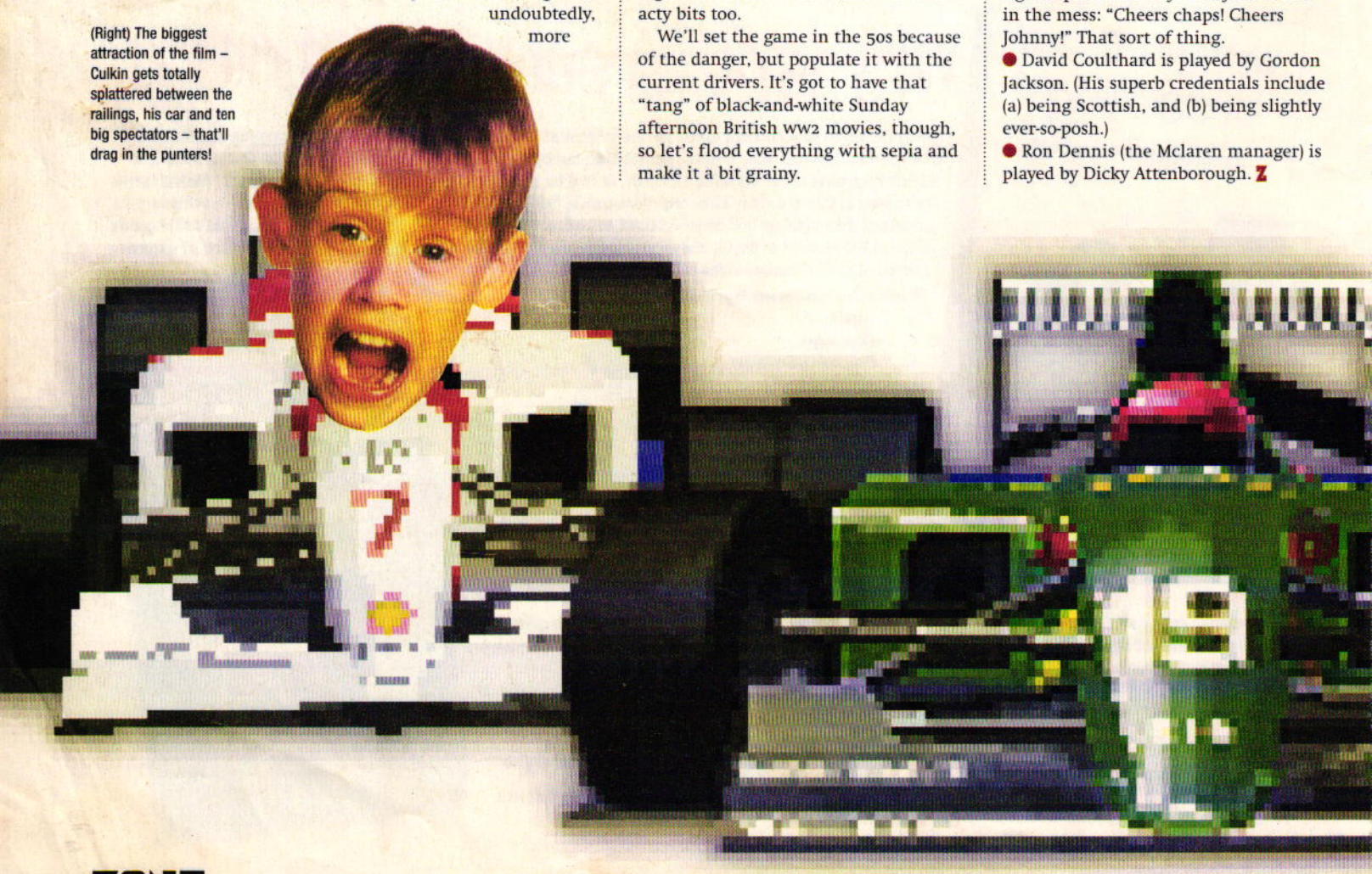
So let's get a computer game designed here. We'll leave the simulation stuff to Geoff Crammond, and go instead for a more "managementy" affair, with, let's say, ten CD's and an "interactive movie" tag. Loads of FMV crashes, and loads of acty bits too.

We'll set the game in the 50s because of the danger, but populate it with the current drivers. It's got to have that "tang" of black-and-white Sunday afternoon British WW2 movies, though, so let's flood everything with sepia and make it a bit grainy.

So far so good. But now we've got to pick the right actors. Here's a small section of my castlist, but insert your own nominations if you feel that some of mine are a bit sort of, er, "dead"...

The cast

- Anthony Perkins plays Damien Hill. (And yes, I know it's "Damon", but I always call him Damien because he's so spooky).
- Schumacher is played by Laurence Olivier (doing his cheesy Nazi routine from *Marathon Man*).
- Martin Brundle is played by Jeff Goldblum (mainly because Jeff Goldblum played "Brundlefly" in *The Fly* – clever that, eh?).
- Mika Hakkinen is played by Mcauley Culkin. (It works, it works, honest.)
- Johnny Herbert is played by John Mills: plucky Johnny, the one-legged fighter pilot who buys everyone a beer in the mess: "Cheers chaps! Cheers Johnny!" That sort of thing.
- David Coulthard is played by Gordon Jackson. (His superb credentials include (a) being Scottish, and (b) being slightly ever-so-posh.)
- Ron Dennis (the Mclaren manager) is played by Dicky Attenborough. Z



(Right) The biggest attraction of the film – Culkin gets totally splattered between the railings, his car and ten big spectators – that'll drag in the punters!



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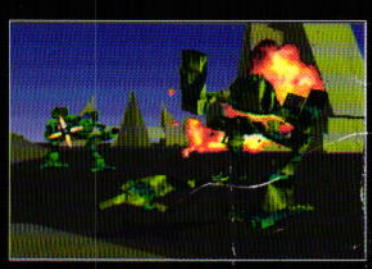
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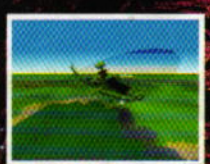
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